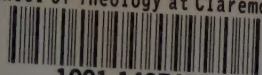


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*The
Proceedings of the Unitarian
Historical Society*

VOLUME IX
PART I

How The History Came To Be Written

Earl Morse Wilbur

The First Unitarian Society of San Francisco, 1950-1951

Henry Chamberlain Meserve

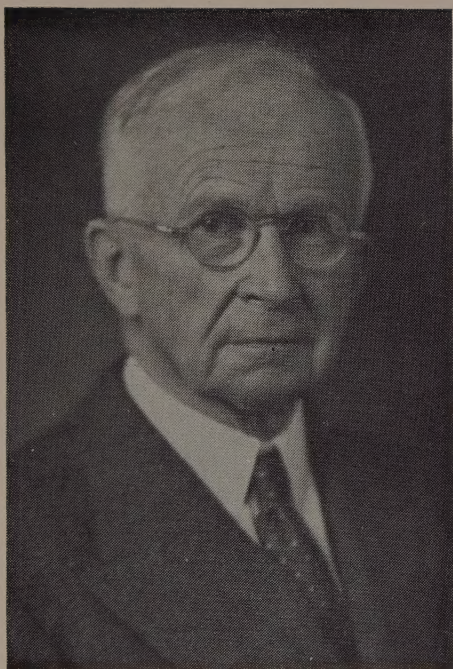
Apostolic Succession

Frederick Lewis Wels

Annual Meeting

1951

25 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts



EARL MORSE WILBUR

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The Proceedings
of the
Unitarian Historical Society

Volume IX

Part I

1951

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California

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The Unitarian Historical Society

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The Unitarian Historical Society was founded in 1901 to collect and preserve books, pamphlets, periodicals, manuscripts and pictures which describe and illustrate the history of Unitarianism; to stimulate an interest in the preservation of the records of Unitarian churches; and to publish material dealing with the history of individual churches, or of the Unitarian movement as a whole.

The Society welcomes to its membership all who are in sympathy with its aims and work. Persons desiring to join will send the annual membership fee of Two Dollars, with their names and addresses, to the Treasurer, or Fifty Dollars for life membership. Each member receives a copy of the Proceedings. About 125 copies are sent to Libraries.

How The History Came To Be Written

By EARL MORSE WILBUR*

As I now bring to an end the researches in the history of our religious movement, which have occupied me increasingly during well over forty years, and the writing that has been my chief work for the past fifteen, it has seemed to me that it might be worth while for me to tell you how the work began and how it has progressed through the years, together with some experiences that have enlightened it which, though they do not belong in the text of the history, may yet add to your interest in it.

I did not undertake this work in pursuance of a considered plan, nor because I felt that I had any special fitness for it, nor had I the remotest notion that I was committing myself to a life-work. It was in fact only by the merest accident that I took my first steps in it at all. It fell out in this way. In the autumn of 1904, as I was trying to lay the foundation of a new divinity school in California, a student asked me if I could suggest a subject with which, by taking one hour a week for one term, he could complete his required schedule. On the spur of the moment I mentioned an elementary course in Unitarian history. It appealed to him; and although I knew no more of the subject than I had gained from a casual reading of Allen's Brief Sketch, I gave the course, in which I managed through the term to keep one jump ahead of him. So the tale began. But had my seer then forewarned me that I was undertaking a task that would increasingly claim my devotion as long as I should live; that it would require that I must first of all gain a working knowledge of eight languages beside my own (two of them of exceptional difficulty); that in order to have a personal knowledge of the lands where our faith has been professed I must spend some four years in ten Continental countries; and that in quest of the books in which the materials for our history are to be found, I should have to search in the catalogues of

*Address before the Unitarian Historical Society, Boston, May 23, 1950. "Dr. Wilbur is the outstanding scholar in the Unitarian Fellowship, whether in America or Europe, and his great history of the origins and development of Unitarianism, of which the concluding volume will soon be published, is a monumental work. In this paper, which he read before the Unitarian Historical Society last May, he gives his own account of how he came to undertake his great task, and of the long series of steps leading to its completion. It is a fascinating tale of scholarly adventure and ingenuity, and its autobiographical character makes it an illuminating picture of the indefatigable industry, keen sagacity, and high devotion with which a great scholar does his work."

HENRY WILBUR FOOTE.

some seventy libraries, mostly foreign, I should doubtless have abandoned the project forthwith. Fortunately, a preview of these demands was withheld from me; and when I gradually discovered them, I was able, with patience and persistence, to meet them one by one. It has been a prolonged labor, and by no means an easy one; but it has been a rare privilege to dig in unplowed fields; for fortunate is the scholar that can find for his research a field where others have not already been at work before him, leaving it for him merely to supplement or revise what they have done.

As I began to explore this field, my first discovery was that available authorities were few and rare. It appeared that no one, in any language, had ever undertaken to write any thing that deserved to be called a real history of the whole Unitarian movement. It is true that a Unitarian bishop in Transylvania had compiled in 1775 an extensive history of Unitarianism in his own country, but it lay buried in two unpublished Latin folios at Kolozsvár; also that a Swiss scholar, before the middle of the nineteenth century, had published a work on Protestant Anti-trinitarians before Faustus Socinus; and that about the same time a German scholar had compiled a history of Socinianism. But though these were both within their limits and for their time creditable works, written from the sources, yet each covered only a section of the whole field, and they were all practically unavailable for English readers; while for England nothing had been done; and America had only Professor Allen's brief sketch of the whole movement. It was the discovery of this fact that transformed what had at first been only a vague dream into a definite plan which laid its mandate upon me and has prescribed my main work to this day.

In teaching the subject I gave the course as a rule every other year; and as my studies widened, my one-hour, one-term course lengthened to one of two hours a week throughout the year. This repeated survey of the subject some fifteen times was an excellent rehearsal which led to constant improvement, for it gave me opportunity gradually to acquire the languages I needed, and gave me time slowly to build up a library to work with. First, came the languages. Like most Bachelors of Arts of my generation, I left college

kowing Latin, French and German only well enough to read them laboriously with the aid of a dictionary, while by myself I had also picked up a smattering of Italian, and in my first pastorate had gained from a stranded Dutch scholar a nodding acquaintance with Dutch, though I had nothing like a practical working knowledge of any of them. I therefore used every opportunity to become more proficient by browsing through all the foreign periodicals we received, so that in five or six years I was able to use them all handily.

At the same time I made a careful card-list of every reference to the subject that I noticed in my reading, until eventually I had a multilingual bibliography of over 10,000 titles, with an indication, where known, of the libraries where I might hope to find them. This list served as a guide for my reading, showed me what libraries I must visit, and what books I should try to acquire. To discover these I poured over catalogues of second-hand European dealers for twenty-five years, and succeeded at length in picking up one by one many rare and important works until I had a large proportion of those that were still to be found; so that we have for a good while boasted that our library at Berkeley has the largest well-balanced collection of Unitariana in the world.

I now saw that it was time for me to learn Polish, without which I could do only superficial work in a very important section of our history. Fortunately I had early formed friendship with Professor George R. Noyes,* who taught the Slavic languages at the University of California, and had said he should be glad to advance my studies by teaching me Polish. I therefore registered as a graduate student at the University and studied Polish for a year (1911-1912). I assure you that this was no child's play for a man approaching 50, for this language cost me more labor than all the others I had studied put together; but by reviewing the grammar repeatedly in the next four years I at length felt prepared to go to Poland for research in the history of Socinianism in its first home. In the autumn of 1916 I, therefore, filed an application for sabbatical leave in the coming year. It was true that World War I had already broken out; but the wise men said it was

*His grandfather of the same name, professor at Harvard Divinity School, was a prominent scholar among the leaders of our movement a hundred years ago.

bound to last only a few weeks, for the nations at war would all be bankrupt in less than three months. Nevertheless the war dragged on until, when my leave arrived in 1917, a visit to Europe was so far out of the question that my plans were hopelessly blocked. I had therefore to change them radically, and spent the next eight months at Cambridge where I had generous access to the riches in the University library, with its abundance of material on Servetus; for I had now picked up Spanish at a summer-school session for use in connection with him. Here, also, a door to the Hungarian language unexpectedly opened for me; for I learned of an educated Hungarian employed in a foreign bank in the north end, whom I employed to translate for me a small history of the Unitarians in Transylvania which I discovered in the library, and he also gave me a little introduction to the language. Not only this, but there was now living in Boston a Harvard graduate who had been in government service at Budapest and had learned the language; he was also acquainted with Unitarians there. Him I employed to go carefully with me through the whole file of the Hungarian Unitarian magazine, fortunately in the library, and translate for me all important historical articles so far as they served my purpose. Thus equipped I returned to Berkeley prepared to begin serious work on my project.

At about this time our Department of Religious Education was planning a new series of Sunday-school texts and asked me to prepare the volume on Unitarian history. I was glad to do this, but the task proved so much longer than either they or I anticipated, what with the prior claims of my teaching and my refusal to let myself be hurried into doing slipshod work, that the book, *Our Unitarian Heritage*, was not published until 1925, and by this time I was again on sabbatical leave, so that the preface was dated from Rome. Being able now without distraction to devote my time to my main purpose, I left my family in France and set out for Poland, stopping enroute for a few days' exploration in libraries at Jena, Leipzig and Berlin, where a letter bearing a gilt seal and the signature of the president of Harvard secured me every courtesy and privilege open to a foreign scholar. Arrived in Poland I spent ten busy and happy weeks filled with study in the charming old city of Krakow. I have never

felt more alone or more homesick than in my first night in that city of 100,000 where, so far as I could learn, there was no one that had ever crossed the Atlantic; but the uniform kindness of those that I met led me afterwards to say that if I were offered six months in some European city of my own choice, I should choose Krakow. Professor Noyes, who had preceded me there by two or three years, had given me letters to several professors at the University, who received me with great cordiality; for a visiting professor from far America was a rare event. Those that I met took interest in my project and were eager to assist me. One of the faculty, indeed, was so kind as to return from his vacation and devote parts of two days to giving me reading references in the line of my investigations; and when I proposed to visit the neglected grave of Socinus out in the country, he volunteered to go with me, and gave me introductions that later were of high value.

This first visit to Poland covered only about two months; and, as I soon discovered that much more time than this was needed, I devoted myself chiefly to learning what the libraries at Krakow contained that I might use when I should be able to come again.

The language, too, although I had made considerable progress in it, was still a barrier; although I took courage when I was accosted one morning by a peasant from the country asking for a direction, and found myself able not only to understand him but to give an answer that he, too, understood.

Besides the work that I accomplished in the libraries at this time, I was able to make two very interesting visits to places that had been important in Unitarian history. The first of these was to Rakow, the chief seat of the Socinians in their most prosperous period. It lies in the country only about forty miles from Krakow; but to reach it, I had to take a morning train and lie over the afternoon and half the night at a junction point, whence a little narrow-gauge train brought me to Rakow soon after light on the second day. There I spent a dreary morning plodding around the muddy streets, photographing and reading inscriptions until afternoon, when I was summoned to the office of the police who

were suspicious as to my purpose in taking pictures of the shabby little town. Having satisfied them, I made my way over muddy country roads with rain now steadily falling, to a neighboring village, where I sought the owner of the manor, to whom I had a letter. I was hospitably received, given a bed to rest in while a servant took my wet clothes to dry out in the kitchen, entertained the family in telling them stories about America, was given a hearty dinner, and was then driven back over dark, sodden roads, piloted by a torch-bearing horseman, to my nine o'clock train, which brought me back to the main line at midnight. Thus ended a most uncomfortable but very interesting day, though it taught me nothing about the once famous capital of our faith in Poland, except that it was, at the time of my visit, a very shabby Jewish village. The only other Unitarian that ever visited it seems to have been the Rev. Alexander Gordon of England.*

My other visit was to Andreaswalde in East Prussia, where the last surviving church of Socinian exiles existed for a hundred and fifty years, until it expired early in the nineteenth century. Again I had to travel by night from Warsaw to the Prussian border. Arrived at my destination, I had but a mile's walk from the station to the place I sought, where I easily identified the manor-house where the last Socinian proprietor had dwelt a century before. The present owner proved to be a bluff Prussian junker, but he showed me the pool by the road where the Socinians had immersed their members by night, the hill-top cemetery where they had buried their dead, and the peasant's home in whose common-room they had worshipped. The house had been half reconstructed only in the past summer; and the rest of it, including the place of worship, was to be torn down in the coming season. So far as I know, I shall remain the only Unitarian that ever visited the place.† Still following Socinian trails, I came next to Koenigsberg, where I found a letter of Socinus in the University library and had it photographed; to Danzig and Poznan where there were libraries to explore; and then to visit a German scholar near Wittenberg who had followed up many old trails of the last Socinians, and so back to my family in Paris.

*See my contemporary account in *The Christian Register*, June 25, 1925, p. 627 f.

†See article cited in note 2 pp. 628, 634.

Here I took up the trail of Servetus; found a statue of him; saw at the Bibliotheque Nationale the manuscript of a supposed first draft of his *Restitutio*, and one of the three known copies of the original work, of which the librarian was so choice that he hardly allowed me to take it into my own hands, until the arrival of another caller diverted his attention; looked up the records of Servetus's trial before the Medical Faculty; and discovered a rich store of materials in the Protestant library. The trail led me next to Lyon, where Servetus spent some time as proof-reader and writer of medical tracts, and to Vienne near by, where he wrote and printed in great secrecy his fatal book, was tried by the Catholics for heresy, escaped from prison, was burnt in effigy, and is today commemorated by another statue. Following his trail next into Spain, I sought in vain for yet other statues reported to be at Barcelona and Saragossa. From Saragossa I made a memorable excursion to Servetus's early home at Villanueva some sixty miles away. Accompanied by my twelve-year-old son, who was reluctant to have his father go alone into the wilds of Northern Spain with no one to account for him, I took an early morning train to a little town where we had to take a private conveyance, and were delighted to find a little Ford station wagon which in half an hour brought us to the village we sought. There we found the old Servetus residence, the church where he had worshiped as a boy, and a votive painting given five years after his death by his mother and brother (perhaps in expiation of his heresy), and showing portraits of them at prayer.* Going on to Madrid, I found yet another statue, a sculptured medallion portrait of him in the court of the Medical Faculty, and a street bearing his name; and crossing back into France, I came to the city of Toulouse, where his discovery of the Bible marked the turning-point in his experience, and saw the church where he worshiped.

Turning from here to Italy, I likewise sought for traces of Socinus. At Siena I visited his birthplace and his early home on the estate of his grandfather; found on a public building sculptured medallion portraits of both Laelius and Faustus Socinus and an alleged contemporary portrait of Lae-

*See narrative in *The Christian Register*, August 20, 1925, p. 813.

lius, and secured casts of medals of both, as well as copies of some Socinus manuscripts in the communal library.

My next experience was to make the long jump to Transylvania, where our churches have survived the persecutions of over three centuries and a half. Once more leaving my family at Vienna, I proceeded to Kolozsvár, not without some inconvenience from the authorities both in entering and in leaving the country. The brethren at Kolozsvár were boundless in their attentions, and the Dean of the Theological School (now Bishop Kiss) even insisted on my taking lodgings in his office, declaring that those at the hotel would be intolerable. I at once began taking lessons in Hungarian to supplement my scanty knowledge of the language, and soon acquired an international reputation for my proficiency in it. It happened this way:

When I asked Dr. Kiss what provision could be made for my laundry, he replied, "Give it to the caretaker, and she will attend to it." I did so, and meanwhile mastered enough Hungarian to say "Hány?" (how much), and "Köszönöm szépen" (thank you); so that when she returned the work I was ready for her and fluntly spoke the necessary three words; whereat she beamed her pleasure and went out into the corridor exclaiming, "Why, the American professor speaks Hungarian perfectly." The legend spread, I know not how; so that a few months later, when I returned to Boston, I was congratulated on my linguistic accomplishments. But my reputation was based solely on my pronunciation (correct I hope) of only three simple words.

The library of Kolozsvár had never had expert supervision and was poorly arranged, but I found what I most wanted and was delighted to find it largely in Latin. But one of the librarians of the University, in charge of ancient books, sent me word that he had some old works that might interest me, and that he would be glad to show them to me. I therefore went at the hour appointed; and assuming that he would, of course, know German, I addressed him in that tongue. He replied brokenly, "Alas, I am no linguist, I speak only Hungarian." And I could not yet speak Hungarian. I then recalled that a friend of mine, Professor of Latin at Berkeley, once told me that when he had occasion as a student to consult the Vatican

library at Rome and knew little Italian, he introduced himself saying, "Americanus sum. Loquerisne Latine, Pater?" The answer was "Loquor, but I also speak English." This gave me a hint, and I tried it on the librarian. Happily he said, "Yes," so that for the next hour or so we talked about his books in Latin, which I had indeed read copiously in my recent studies but until now had never tried to speak.

But preparation for writing the history of our movement involved not only reading books and manuscripts, but also visiting churches and buildings and places that have been connected with the history. It was therefore not the least interesting part of my visit to Transylvania to make a personally conducted tour of the ancient churches in Szeklerland, under the guidance of one of our ministers who had spent a year at Meadville. This tour gave me an intimate view of these interesting churches, remote from railroads, and enabled me also to visit Gyulafehervar, which was the capital while King John reigned, where David was his Court Preacher, and where he was later tried for innovation and sentenced to prison, and to Deva where he was imprisoned and miserably died.

As the end of my sabbatical leave was now approaching, and in the short time remaining I could hope to do no effective work on the Continent, I crossed over to England in time for the centenary meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, which were to fall early in June. Too little time remained for me to begin the study of English Unitarian history, but I employed it in getting acquainted with English Unitarians; met many of their leaders; preached in several of their churches; addressed anniversary meetings of our Irish brethren at their General Synod at Belfast; and spoke at the Provincial Assembly of our churches in Lancashire and Cheshire at Liverpool. All the experiences of these happy weeks were, of course, richly worth while in themselves, but they also provided a broad background for understanding the history and spirit of our movement in the British Isles. At midsummer I returned to my work in the United States.

It will be realized that in this varied year abroad I had made little progress toward the composition of the history;

but I had made an extensive survey of the whole field, whose details I should need to work out later. Meantime I needed to explore further some important details requiring closer study. There, for example, was Servetus. The external facts of his life I had well in hand already; but I was forced to admit that I should have no right to deal with his thought until I had made myself master of at least his more influential writings, and this called for translation of them into English. To this work I therefore devoted most of my spare time for the next year or more, translating with meticulous care Servetus's first two works on the Trinity, providing them with introduction and notes, tracing to their sources all his numberless citations. It was at length handsomely published by the Harvard University Press, and it won me (to my surprise) reputation as the best living authority on Servetus.* Another task of drudgery now faced me. The only contemporary history of our movement in Poland is Lubieniecki's *History of the Polish Reformation*, 1685, a rare book to find, and when found a hard one to read, but it is an invaluable source-book for early Unitarian history, and without mastering that I could not hope properly to write of our history in Poland. That, too, I must put into English. The unpublished manuscript of my translation awaits the favorable attention of some patron.

The six years intervening between my return from Europe and my next sabbatical were devoted, in such leisure as they afforded, to maturing my studies and expanding my lectures as a basis for the actual history, which now began to take definite form. My notes were extended, gaps were filled out, and the work was advanced to a point where I could see the scope of the whole and the proper relations of its parts. Thus, when my next leave came in the early summer of 1931, I was prepared to devote myself intensely and intelligently to serious research, and sailed with high hopes of a profitable year. Again accompanied by my family, I first spent a vacation month in travel, and was just ready to begin steady work when, without premonition, I received a cable reporting that the school I served had suffered a crushing financial disaster which at once cut off my allowance, and would ap-

*See Stanislaus von Dun in Borkowski, *Spinoza*, Munster 1/w, 1939, iii, 394.

parently put an end to all my hopes and plans. Quite at a loss what to do, I saw that I must return to America. And yet, hopeless as the case seemed, some little shred of hope must have remained; for I remember that while waiting at Amsterdam for my steamer, I debated whether I should now buy an expensive Dutch dictionary that I had expected to need or should give it up, seeing that there was now no reason to expect that I should ever have use for it. On the bare chance that some heaven might open, I took the risk and bought the book. That was, I think, the turning-point. For on the steamer there was an American scholar returning from a year's study on the Guggenheim Foundation. My wife made his acquaintance, and learned that while grants had hitherto been limited to persons under 35, the rule had lately been relaxed; so that although I had just entered my sixty-sixth year, there was the barest possibility that I might obtain a grant. I determined to take the chance, filed my application in New York with an impressive list of references, and prepared to wait the six months before the awards were to be made. Returning to Berkeley, I found that there was no hope of my resuming my teaching, and so came back east and settled at Cambridge so as to be near the libraries, picked up what support I could get from pulpit supplies, continued my studies in all my free time, and in March had notice that a fellowship was granted me.

With the way now clear again for a year of uninterrupted study, I at once returned to Europe, first spent a month reading in the great library in Berlin, and then proceeded to Krakow where I studied in its two fine libraries for the rest of the year. There is naturally little detail in this work that would justify telling, but I gladly record that the librarians and professors were unlimited in their helpfulness. Several of the most important works, however, which called for longer use than my limited time allowed for, were unfortunately extant in only two or three copies altogether. Now, in writing to our librarian at home, I had casually expressed the wish that some one might give \$100 for getting photostatic copies of these. One of my old students saw my letter and, without my knowledge, reported my wish to a lady of means, of which the result was that in due time I received a draft for the

desired amount, which was enough to provide our library with prints of all the works most needed. One of these was the earliest extant edition of the Racovian Catechism. No copy of the first edition is known; but at Krakow I found a copy of the second edition, in which four sheets of the obviously first edition had been substituted for missing sheets, making a unique and precious relic; and these I had included in my photostat.

On almost the same day I made another discovery yet more exciting. Visitors to the abandoned grave of Socinus had for more than a century been reporting fragments of an Italian couplet existing mutilated on his battered monument, but they were all incomplete and garbled. Of course, I much desired to recover the original text, but could find no clue to it. But a Krakow library treasures a precious old autograph album of one who had been a student in the famous Socinian Academy at Rakow early in the seventeenth century, signed by many of the most prominent Socinians of the time. Now in turning over the pages of this I espied some Italian words; and upon looking more closely I saw that here was indeed the whole text of the inscription I sought to complete, which no one hitherto had noticed. It was the autograph of a son of the proprietor on whose estate was the grave of Socinus, where he had doubtless often seen and read the inscription; and when we succeeded the next year in having a handsome new monument erected, I had it inscribed with the original words so happily discovered.

After finishing at Krakow I spent a few days in libraries at Warsaw and then returned for two more fruitful months in Berlin, just at the time when Hitler was coming into power. Passing over brief visits to Jena and Munich, and to several Italian libraries, in each of which I found useful material, I hastened, as soon as the spring weather allowed, to make a more thorough study of Unitarianism in Transylvania. At Kolozsvár I found myself now not only an honored guest but an old friend. I pursued my researches successfully, being much assisted in consulting the original works of David by a young man lately returned from studies at Meadville. But the greatest treasure I found there was a history of Unitarianism in Transylvania (to which I have referred above), by

Bishop Foszto-Uzoni, dated 1775, in two massive volumes of Latin manuscript belonging to the Bishop's library. Fortunately two other copies also exist in the college libraries at Kolozsvár and Székely-Keresztur. It was easy to see that this work was so full as to render any other almost superfluous. I could also see that adequate use of it would require a year's time. I therefore determined to prefer a most audacious request. I addressed a letter to the Consistory, saying that I wished to give their history the ample treatment it deserved but that I could not do it without this work, and that it was quite impossible for me to remain at Kolozsvár for so long a time. Would they therefore, in their interest as well as my own, seeing that two other copies were available, permit me to take this one with me to America, to be returned when I had used it. I dared not expect that they would consent; but no one could have been more surprised, or more delighted than I was when they graciously granted my request. Transylvanian brethren brought the volumes personally to me at Copenhagen at the International Congress the next year; and I brought them to Berkeley, where they were kept in safe-deposit until I was ready to use them. When I had done with them, war clouds hung over Transylvania; and since it was impossible for me then to fulfill my promise as to their return, I did the next best thing and delivered the books to Dr. Szent-Ivanyi, who was now in Boston. It remains for time to tell whether or when the books can safely be sent home, or what other disposition of them may be thought feasible.

Having now no reason to stay much longer at Kolozsvár, I went next to visit the libraries in Switzerland. At Zurich I followed up the trail of Ochino and of Laelius Socinus; at Basel I found the haunts of Joris, a whole trunkful of his unpublished manuscripts, and a contemporary portrait of him in the Museum; at Geneva in the archives I saw the records of the trial of Servetus, which had once been secreted for a century, lest Calvin's reputation should suffer if they were made public; and visited Farges in the vicinity, where the unfortunate Gribaldi ended his days and died forsaken. Next I took a memorable journey to the Lower Engadine where early Italian Anti-trinitarians once had churches, in the midst of incomparable scenery; and hence back to Berlin and again

to Krakow, where I found the new Socinus monument finished.* Finally came the International Historical Congress at Warsaw, where I had been appointed to read a paper on Socinus.

It was already beyond the year for which my fellowship had provided; and early in the spring I had foreseen that in that time of financial uncertainty in America there was little chance of my getting a renewal of my fellowship; and although I had managed to save enough to last through the summer, I could finish only my work on the Continent and must leave England undone. I therefore ventured to try whether I could find some opportunity in England, and wrote letters of inquiry to our two English colleges. At Manchester College, Oxford, there was no opening, though Dr. Drummond there, to whom I had also written, requested that I wait a month when he might have something of interest to propose. But in the Unitarian College at Manchester there did happen to be a vacancy in the chair of Homiletics which they would be glad to have me take for the term at a small stipend and living expenses, with ample leisure for study in a library rich in materials that I needed. I accepted with a light heart, and after a few weeks heard also from Dr. Drummond, who told me (what I had not known before) that he was Secretary of the Hibbert Trust, and that the Trustees of that Fund had, upon his recommendation, voted me a Hibbert fellowship of £300 for the year. Thus relieved from anxiety, I finished final brief studies at Jena and Halle and crossed over to England just in time for the fall term, and at the end of that went up to London to enjoy the rich resources of the British Museum and Dr. William's Library.

This rich year of reading in England furnished a wealth of material for the history, though little for this paper, and it also gave me a rare opportunity to learn the background of our history there and to know many of our congregations; for I suppose that I preached in more of our British churches than any other American has ever done. But I must not omit to tell of two pleasant incidents, for they help to explain

*For accounts of the grave and monument to Socinus, see articles in *Christian Register*, January 26, 1933, p. 53; November 23, 1933, p. 737 f; *Inquirer*, October 21, 1933, p. 489 f; *Christian Register*, May 7, 1925, p. 448 f; *Proceedings of Unitarian Historical Society*, iv, part 2, 1936.

how I was enabled to continue my studies. I was invited as a substitute to attend the annual dinner of a famous Book Club in one of the Midland towns and to respond to the traditional Dissenters' toast, "Civil and religious liberty the world over." My speech was apparently satisfactory, for a few months later I was asked to supply the pulpit there for a Sunday and did so. The next morning, as I was leaving for my train, my host asked me whether there were not some way in which he could assist in the work of which I had told him. I gave him a truthful answer, whereupon he handed me his check for £100.

Not long after this I was also asked to dine with the Hibbert Trustees at their annual meeting. In the course of the dinner the President leaned over and asked me whether it would be agreeable to me to have my fellowship extended. I replied that it was true that I had about six months' reading yet to do for which no provision was made. He said that the Trustees had thought that that might be the case and had voted to make me a grant for another half-year. So I continued till the end of December; and when it was done, I was able to say that if I had two weeks more to spend in England, I should hardly know how to employ them. In the meantime I had been able to attend the International Congress at Copenhagen and to put in a month studying still-neglected materials in the libraries of the Remonstrant church at Rotterdam and the Mennonite library at Amsterdam, both of which had treasures of manuscript material from Socinian scholars that had taken refuge there two hundred and fifty years ago.

Thus, having finished nearly three years of research abroad, I returned at the end of the year, ready to begin the real work of composing the history. I had calculated that the work might be finished in five years; but the composition proved slow and laborious, and there were sundry interruptions; so that ten years had passed before the first volume appeared in 1945. The second volume called for much additional reading, and serious illness stopped the work altogether for six months; so that only after five years more have I reached the end.

Some reviewer has written that this will undoubtedly be the definitive work on the history of Unitarianism. I should be the last to make such a claim for it; although it is not

likely that any one in future will have the access that I have had to valuable sources in Poland, Transylvania and Germany, of which I suppose that many must now have been destroyed or hopelessly scattered by war. But there are numerous points that invite further exploration and fuller writing, which I could not elaborate as they deserved without throwing the history as a whole out of proportion—as, indeed, I have already done in the case of Servetus and of Priestley, who seemed in their time to have embodied it so fully. But I am unwilling to lay down my pen without suggesting a number of inviting themes that should yet be investigated and written of at length in order to make our history more complete.

Here is a bare list of such topics:

THE LIFE OF GIORGIO BIANDRATA.

THE LIFE OF FRANCIS DAVID.

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF LAELIUS AND FAUSTUS SOCINUS.

A CRITICAL EDITION OF THE RACOVIAN CATECHISM, WITH REFERENCE TO THE REVISIONS IN THE LATER EDITIONS.

THE RELATION OF THE POLISH BRETHREN TO PACIFISM.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF THOMAS BELSHAM.

THE SALTERS' HALL ASSEMBLY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE RADICAL STRAIN IN AMERICAN UNITARIANISM FROM EMERSON ON.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE OLD BOSTON CHURCHES IN THE UNITARIAN TRADITION.

THE RISE, DECLINE AND RECOVERY OF UNITARIANISM IN THE SOUTH.

A CENTURY OF UNITARIANISM ON THE PACIFIC COAST.

LOCAL HISTORIES OF ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT UNITARIAN CHURCHES IN AMERICA.

I do not mean a merely superficial and popular treatment of any of these topics, but thorough exhaustive and scholarly studies of them. They offer rich fields of investigation to any competent students who will undertake them.

I have now related the story of my history; how I came to write it, what difficulties had to be overcome to do it at all, what it has cost in long years of labor, extensive travel and no small expense, how hindrances have been removed by the generosity of friends, how I have been able to visit practically all the places associated with our movement,* how

*About the only place of historical interest to Unitarians that I have failed to visit is the site of Priestley's last years at Northumberland, Pennsylvania.

ready friends everywhere have been to show me kindness or give me help; how many times it has almost seemed as if special providence had intervened to open the way when it had appeared to be closed.

The longer I have been occupied with the history of Unitarianism the more I have realized how rich it is in its implications, how inspiring it is to our devotion, and how full it is of suggestions for our present and our future. In so far as my work has awakened livelier interest, deeper appreciation and more sincere devotion to our cause, it has done what I have hoped it might do.

Contributions To Unitarian History

By EARL M. WILBUR

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The First Unitarian Society In San Francisco

1850 to 1950

By HENRY CHAMBERLAIN MESERVE

Interestingly enough the earliest explorations of the California Coast came nearly a century before the first voyages to the North Atlantic Coast. Columbus on his third and fourth voyages diligently searched the Isthmus of Panama for some passage to the "Western Sea" which the natives insisted was not far away. In 1513 it was the Spaniard Balboa, not Cortez, as Keats has it in his Sonnet, who stood "silent upon a peak in Darien" and became the first European to behold "The Sea beyond America." It is related that having fallen upon his knees and thanked Heaven for this honor, he descended from the peak, waded into the water waist-deep and "took possession of it, and all the lands it washed, for Spain." In 1537, Cortez, who was indeed a stout and persistent explorer, sent an expedition northward along the California Coast which reached to the 29th degree of north latitude (not far from where the city of Los Angeles now stands.) This expedition reported a bare, volcanic land, hardly fit for human habitation and unworthy of a second visit. In 1543 another Spaniard, Cabrillo, sailed northward from Mexico as far as the 40th degree of latitude. Here he saw mountains covered with snow (probably Mount Shasta was among them) and a large cape which he named De Mendoza. It is now called Mendocino and is near the Oregon border of California. Cabrillo sailed on to the 44th degree where extreme cold and lack of supplies forced him to turn back.

But it was an Englishman who first landed on the Northern California coast. In 1579 Francis Drake, in the famed Golden Hind, sailed along the coast nearly three hundred miles farther north than Cabrillo. Then, driven by fierce northwest winds, his ship went southward again until a safe anchorage was found in 38 degrees latitude. Here Drake and his party went ashore and stayed for 36 days. This site has been located and is today known as Drake's Bay, a few miles north of the Golden Gate. For years patriotic San Francisco historians held to the theory that it may have been San Francisco Bay. It is true that the log of Drake's voyage may be

presumed sufficiently inaccurate to permit an error of some thirty miles in computing his position, but more compelling is the fact that Drake made no enthusiastic comment on the Bay in which he anchored and it is a settled thing among San Franciscans that no one can behold or enter its Bay without making enthusiastic comments. In the 1930's a plaque left by Drake was found on the shores of Drake's Bay.

The next Chapter in the development of San Francisco was written by the Missionary efforts of the Franciscan Fathers working northward from Mexico. During the period from 1769 to 1823 these fearless and dedicated men founded no less than 21 mission settlements in California. More gentle and persistent in their methods than the earlier Spanish conquerors who sought principally to exploit the land and its people, the Franciscans must be credited with the achievement of establishing the first permanent settlements. During the long period of decline when the decadent Spanish Empire in America was slowly rotting away through the greed and inefficiency of its representatives, these men of God worked steadily. The founding of San Francisco as a permanent community goes back to two dates: September 17, 1776 when the Spanish military post was established in what is still called the Presidio; and October 9 of the same year when the Mission Dolores, in honor of the sufferings of St. Francis of Assisi, was founded through the inspiration of Father Junipero Serra, who, with Thomas Starr King occupies a place of honor in the Hall of Fame.

The complex history of California from 1822, when it became a province of the Mexican Empire to 1846 when it became a newly conquered territory of the United States is too long to relate here. A few American settlers had come to the city. The Hudson Bay Company had a trading post. The Franciscan Fathers went on about their work. In January of 1847 the community had a population of 300. By the middle of March in 1848, the population had grown to 800 and a public school had been opened. The city's growth was reassuring and it bade fair to become an important port and mercantile center. Then, in the spring of 1848, gold was discovered. By the end of 1849 the population of the city was over 20,000. More than four hundred ships rode at anchor

in its vast bay. People lived in tents or slept in the open. Thousands flocked to the city by sea and land to set off for the gold fields or to remain behind and supply the prospectors. This latter occupation must have been quite as profitable as the former, if one can judge by the scale of prices in the city at this time. You could rent a room with a single bed for \$150 a month. Wood was \$40 a cord and flour \$40 a barrel. The city received its Charter from the first California Legislature on May 1, 1850 and the state was admitted to the Union on September 9 of the same year.

Early accounts of the Gold Rush days in San Francisco are wonderful and terrible. Growth was so rapid, wealth was so great, that the organization of sound community life, which was the first concern of most of the settlers on our eastern shores, took second place to the struggle to get as much as possible before the supply of gold was exhausted. For the most part men were not interested in founding churches or building permanent homes. Many had come, leaving their wives and children behind in the East. For some, there was perhaps the hope of a triumphant return home. For others, there was the lure of adventure, quick wealth and freedom from the bonds of home which had grown tiresome. But there were some who sought a more stable community life and had resolved to make this booming city their home. Except for the Franciscan missions and churches, the first church to be established in San Francisco was the Baptist.

In the spring of 1850 there arrived in San Francisco a Unitarian minister, the Rev. Charles Andrews Farley. He had previously served several Unitarian Churches. In Alton, Illinois, he had been a friend of Dr. William Emerson. He had been present when in 1837 the abolitionist, Elijah Lovejoy had been shot by an outraged mob for his anti-slavery stand. Farley, a young minister just out of Divinity School, fought hard for sanity and law in the tense situation. But with his friend Emerson dead, and the whole town in open hostility to his views, he was doomed to failure. He returned to New England in 1839. He served the Church in Saco, Maine, until 1841. Then he accepted a call to Eastport where he remained until 1845. In Eastport one of his parishioners

was a Mr. Joseph Coolidge. The two men were to meet again in San Francisco, drawn there by the gold rush fever. He served the Church in Norwich, Conn., from 1847 to 1849. "In 1850," reads a footnote in "Heralds of a Liberal Faith," "Mr. Farley went to California on private business." In early 1850 he was in the Feather River gold country. But whatever Mr. Farley's intentions may have been, he soon found himself in the ministry again. There was a group of Unitarians in the booming frontier city, among them his old friend, Joseph Coolidge of Eastport, Maine. On October 20, 1850, a Unitarian service was held in Simmons Athenaeum Hall, and Mr. Farley was there to conduct the service and preach.

The following ad appeared in the *Alta California*, October 18, 1850:

Religious Intelligence

There will be Religious Service (Unitarian) on Sunday morning next, October 20th, at 11 o'clock, at Simmon's Atheneum Hall. Entrance on Commercial and Sacramento streets. A discourse will be preached by Rev. Charles A. Farley.—*Alta California*, Oct. 18, 1850.

Joseph Coolidge produced some hymn books and led a volunteer choir of four on his violin. When the service was over twenty-five men stayed on to consider the formation of a Unitarian Society. The Society came into being officially on November 17th, 1850, and regular services were held in the large hall of the Museum Building until April 1851. Mr. Farley then returned to the East, for reasons which are obscure. So far as we can tell, Farley was a pioneer, prophetic type of minister, radical in his social opinions, vehemently abolitionist, and fearless in his preaching. An excellent paper of the life of Mr. Farley is to be found in the proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society, Volume VI, Part I. The author is Wallace W. Robbins.

The New Society in San Francisco faced serious problems after Mr. Farley's departure. No other minister was available locally. Besides this, the community, now swollen in population to thirty thousands, was in terrible confusion. Lawlessness was the rule and citizens were forced to form Vigilance Committees to enforce the order which the newly-established courts sometimes could not and sometimes would not enforce. To add to all this the whole city was swept by

two dreadful fires in May and June of 1851. In these disasters nearly the whole city was destroyed. It was not until January 1852 that the Unitarians met again and wrote to Boston for aid in securing a minister. It took six months for negotiations to be completed but at last, in July, 1852, the Rev. Joseph Harrington set sail from New York and arrived in San Francisco on August 27. Unitarian services were immediately held, this time in the U. S. District Court-room which was crowded to overflowing. So great was the interest that soon afterwards the services were transferred to the Armory Hall on the corner of Washington and Sansome Streets which was then the largest hall in town. Before Mr. Harrington's arrival, a lot had been purchased and plans started for the raising of money for a building. The prospects of the Society seemed bright. Their minister was popular and effective and well-supported. But suddenly, on November 2nd, Mr. Harrington died after a very brief illness and the Society was again without a leader.

It is a testimony to the courage of these San Francisco Unitarians that even the loss of their leader did not deter them from proceeding with their plans for the erection of a building. Hardly had their new leader, the Rev. Frederic T. Gray of the Bullfinch-Place Church in Boston, arrived, before the new building was ready for use. It was dedicated on July 17, 1853. No vestige of the building remains today. The site is occupied by the stores, offices and hotels of the modern city.

Mr. Gray had come for only a year, but during this period the Society took on for the first time some of the characteristics which we usually associate with a Church. It had a building of its own. The ladies united in a "benevolent society." A Sunday School was formed under the leadership of a Mr. David Page who had been associated with Mr. Gray's Sunday School in Boston. Services were held regularly and the Church took its place among the established religious institutions of the city. Mr. Gray returned to Boston in June of 1854. Mr. Horace Davis writes of him: "He was a kind, gentle soul; but I think he had little love for the restless California life of those days, and was glad once more to be in Boston."

In September, 1854, the Rev. Rufus P. Cutler of Portland, Maine, took up the ministry of the San Francisco Church. His five years of service were stormy ones in the life of the city. Typical of the period is the famous story of the murder of James King, the editor of the San Francisco Bulletin, by a member of the Board of Supervisors, James Casey. The quarrel began when King pointed out in an editorial that Casey had, prior to his coming to California, been the inmate of a well-known institution on the Hudson, called Sing Sing. Furthermore, King declared, Casey had "stuffed himself through the ballot-box as elected to the Board of Supervisors from a district where it is said he was not even a candidate." Casey's response to the editorial was to shoot King as he left his office and started home for dinner. Casey then gave himself up to the police, which, in these days, was the safest place for a murderer. But the police were not a very strong organization at this time and it soon became plain that the citizens were not disposed to wait while the law took its sober and devious course. A Vigilance Committee was organized and while the ministers of the city preached on such topics as "Law and Religion," the Vigilance Committee broke into the jail and made Casey and another man awaiting trial its prisoners. The following morning James King, who had lingered on a week, died. Two days later, James King's funeral was held in the Unitarian Church with Mr. Cutler and several other ministers in charge of the service. As soon as the burial was over the Vigilance Committee completed its business with the public hanging of Casey and the other prisoner from the balcony in front of its headquarters in downtown San Francisco. Nor did the Vigilance Committee suspend operations here. For a period of months it continued to take the law into its own hands. The justification was strong, for the officers of law and order were weak and corrupt. For this reason the Committee had the support of the majority of the people including the clergy. As often happens, however, the movement threatened to get out of control and some of its members seemed disposed to set up a private government of their own. They even went so far as to waylay a ship laden with arms for the local militia and appropriate the arms for the Committee's use. Yet in defense of

the Vigilants it must be said that they voluntarily disbanded and turned back the powers which they had appropriated to the duly constituted authorities in August, 1856. Such was the community in which Mr. Cutler labored as minister of the Unitarian Church until June of 1859. After Mr. Cutler's departure, the Rev. John A. Buckingham served as interim minister from June 1859 to April 1860.

With the coming of Thomas Starr King in April of 1860 the Church's golden age began. Though very young he already had a national reputation as a brilliant lecturer and preacher. The response of the people of the Church and of the whole community to his coming was enthusiastic. He preached to large crowds from the very start and in short order the Church's debt had been retired, its pews all rented and its reputation in the city greatly enhanced. King had promised to stay in San Francisco only one year, but with the election of Abraham Lincoln as President and the subsequent attack on Fort Sumter and beginning of the Civil War, a new and challenging situation presented itself.

What was to be the position of California? At the outbreak of the war forty percent of the people of California were of southern birth. The State government was controlled by a Democratic Governor and Legislature, and four Democrats were the State's representatives in Congress. The Pacific Department of the Army was commanded by General Albert Sydney Johnston, a native of Kentucky, whose sympathies were entirely with the seceding states. There were dreams and plans among many other Californians of an independent Pacific Republic. Only seven out of fifty-three newspapers in the state had backed Lincoln and though he won the election he had received only 28 percent of the State's total vote. Thomas Starr King dissolved his connection with the Hollis Street Church in Boston and threw himself into the struggle to save California for the Union Cause. Throughout the summer of 1861 King traveled up and down the State speaking to large crowds in the cities and towns on behalf of the Union Cause, denouncing slavery, urging the people to elect a government committed to the Union and to freedom. He was eloquent and tireless and it is generally accepted in California that no one force did as much

to save California for the Union as the faith and labor of Thomas Starr King. The California election of 1861 settled the issue. The people voted by a substantial majority for the Union ticket, headed by Governor Leland Stanford; Thomas Starr King had now become one of the most influential men in the State. He turned his energies to the task of raising funds for the Sanitary Commission, predecessor to the Red Cross. This organization, inaugurated by his old friend, Henry W. Bellows of New York, sought to provide for the care of sick and wounded soldiers. King took up its cause with vigor and traveled during 1862 throughout California and as far north as Vancouver Island. A million and a half dollars flowed in to the national fund from the Pacific coast area, a sum far larger than its proportionate share and thus King played a leading role in one of the earliest efforts to establish and disburse a national fund for the relief of human suffering. The size of his labors was enormous. Travel in those days was neither swift nor easy, and King apparently refused no speaking engagement anywhere. He visited the cities, but also villages with strange names: Deadwood, Horsetown, Mugginsville, Rough and Ready, and Scott's Bar.

At the same time he managed somehow to carry on his ministerial duties in the San Francisco Church. By 1862 the Society had outgrown its first building and plans were under way for the erection of a new Church. The corner-stone was laid in December of 1862 and with painstaking care Starr King himself helped plan the construction of the building. On January 10, 1864, the Church, on Geary Street near Stockton, was finished and dedicated. The cost of the Church, \$90,000, was entirely raised by subscription so that the structure was debt free. The renting of the pews brought in \$20,000 in one night and plate collections for the previous year amounted to \$5,000 (we are with patience and infinite labor, trying to raise a similar sum for the Church this year). John Greenleaf Whittier wrote a hymn for the dedication of the new Church. It is still in our hymn books in slightly altered form, and we sing it to the Palestrina tune:

Thy grace impart! In time to be
Shall holier alters rise to thee,
Thy Church our broad humanity.

Now indeed it seemed as if the Church's glorious moment had come. It possessed a beautiful new edifice. It had become through the labors of its minister, one of the largest and certainly the most influential Church in the city and the State. Starr King was a prophet of national repute whose future promised years of ripe wisdom and strong leadership. But he preached for seven Sundays in the new Church and then died suddenly from diphtheria. He was only 39 years old. The whole city and state mourned his death. He was buried in a marble sarcophagus in the yard of the Church which he had labored to build. It is interesting that today there are but two grave yards within the city limits of San Francisco. One is that of Father Junipero Serra, in the cemetery, within the walls of the old Mission Dolores; the other that of Thomas Starr King in the yard of the present Church.

When the news of Starr King's death reached the east the Rev. Henry W. Bellows, President of the U. S. Sanitary Commission, came out to fill the pulpit for six months until a successor for Starr King could be chosen. In September of 1864 the Rev. Horatio Stebbins of Portland, Maine, assumed the duties of minister.

The Church which in its first 14 years had been served by six ministers, now entered upon a long period of stability and constructive growth. Dr. Stebbins' pastorate covered 35 years, saw the building of the present Church on the corner of Franklin and Geary Streets in 1889, and the growth of the city from a raw and somewhat lawless boom city into one of the great cultural and commercial centers of the land. Dr. Stebbins was not Thomas Starr King. He brought other gifts of wisdom and gentleness, of far-sighted and patient labor, and of deep spiritual insight, the gifts, perhaps, which Starr King would have developed and given had he lived. The years of Dr. Stebbins' ministry saw the spread of Unitarianism to many other cities on the West Coast. In 1867 the Church in Portland, Oregon, was founded with the counsel and encouragement of Dr. Stebbins, and the Rev. Thomas L. Eliot, son of William G. Eliot of St. Louis, came out to preach there. In 1877 Churches were established in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Diego. In 1885 the Pacific Coast Unitarian Conference was founded.

These years of progress and growth saw many interesting visitors to the Church. In 1866, Mark Twain wrote to his mother in St. Louis that he was "thick as thieves with the Rev. Dr. Stebbins. I am running on preachers now altogether; I find them gay. Stebbins is a regular brick." In 1871 Ralph Waldo Emerson gave a series of lectures in the Church. They were well attended at first, but towards the end of the series the audiences dropped off.

Dr. Stebbins remarked: "I thought the people would tire in the sockets of their wings if they tried to follow him." Incidentally, Emerson was paid for his lectures in \$20 gold pieces and they were the first he had ever seen. Other notables who visited the Church during Dr. Stebbins' ministry were Robert Collyer, Julia Ward Howe, Professor Andrew P. Peabody, of whom it is said "he wist not that his face shone," Minot Savage, John White Chadwick and President Eliot of Harvard. The homiletical diet must have been substantial in these years, not only because of these notables, but also because of Dr. Stebbins' own vigorous mind and high faith. Mr. Horace Davis who married the daughter of Thomas Starr King was a close friend in these years. So also was Mr. Charles Murdock who later wrote a biography of Dr. Stebbins and who directed the Sunday School for years.

Early in his ministry in San Francisco Dr. Stebbins became interested in the College of California in Oakland. Its first graduation, at which three students received degrees, was held in 1864. He shortly became a member of the Board of this institution and was influential in transferring the organization and property to the State as the foundation for the University of California, later located at Berkeley. He served for 26 years as a member of the State Board of Regents.

These years also saw the establishment of the Church endowment through a number of charitable trusts, and the removal of the Church from its downtown position on Geary Street near Stockton to its present location. The friendly relation in which the Church and Dr. Stebbins stood to other religious groups in the city is witnessed by the fact that after the abandonment of the old Church and during the building of the new one, the Sunday School met regularly in the First

Congregational Church and the congregation worshipped in the liberal Jewish Synagogue, Temple Emanuel.

Late in 1899 Dr. Stebbins' health began to fail. The society secured the services of the Rev. Stopford Brooke as supply minister. It was hoped that after a rest Dr. Stebbins could return to his active ministry, but this turned out to be impossible. Shortly after the completion of his 35th year of service he asked definitely to be relieved of his duties, and this request was regretfully granted.

It indicates the character of this remarkable man and faithful minister that on the occasion of his 35th anniversary as he stood near the end of his ministry he had this to say of the task of a minister: "A minister should know the world without being worldly, understand the wickedness of the world without partaking its wickedness, though he himself is weak; sympathizing with men of all ranks and conditions, severely upright, yet tender-hearted. Beyond that there is not much that I believe I would tell anybody. I would talk with anybody, and supplement my own experience by his, and increase the breadth of my knowledge, and learn to know how little I know, yet standing firm as a rock on the eternal verities of moral and spiritual being."

Dr. Stebbins' retirement brought to a close the Church's first fifty years. It was a half-century, stormy at first, but in its later years marked by the steady growth of a strong institution under the leadership of a wise and great-hearted minister.

II

The Church's second half-century opened auspiciously with the calling of Rev. Bradford Leavitt of Washington, D. C., to the pulpit. Mr. Charles Murdock, who had been a member of the Church since 1864, declared in his address at the Church's 50th anniversary celebration: "The past is secure. The future smiles with promise. The present challenges us to devoted service. Let us thank God, take courage, and press on." (October 21, 1900)

Mr. Leavitt assured his people that: "The twentieth century will be better than the nineteenth; it will be inferior to the twenty-first. If we have learned anything in this past

century it is that mankind is advancing and the world is growing better. Pessimism no longer has philosophic standing"

These early years of the twentieth century were years of great hopes and great accomplishments. During this period the Church stood debt free and in flourishing condition. More than six hundred women were connected with its several female organizations. The Sunday School, though not as large as in the early days when its membership once rose to 408, still numbered its pupils in the hundreds. The brilliance of Starr King and the long patient labors of Dr. Stebbins had made the Church an important factor in the religious and civic life of the city. Unitarianism was vigorous in the region about. In 1906 Mr. Leavitt reported, in reply to an article in the *Christian Register* that: "We are feeling particularly jubilant over accomplishments and prospects. . . . A few years ago the Church debts in this department aggregated over \$53,000, while today they amount to \$1,000, practically eliminated altogether. . . . Six new Churches have recently been organized, and two Church buildings erected free from debt. We have headquarters in San Francisco we are all proud of. We have a new Divinity School in Berkeley supported by two of our laymen. A ten thousand dollar house and lot has just been purchased and presented to the School."

During these prosperous years the Church acquired, by bequest from the Estate of Henry W. Pierce, the sum of \$10,000 to be expended in the purchase of books for the Church Library. The Henry Pierce Library today is divided into two collections, one at the Church in San Francisco, the other at the Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley.

On April 18, 1906 came the earthquake. "The sun set the night before on a great and beautiful city; never so prosperous, never so bright a future," wrote the editor of the *Pacific Unitarian*. By the time the fire had run its course the whole of the downtown section of the city, except for a very few buildings, was in ruins. The Unitarian Church stands about a block west of the place where the fire stopped. Many other Churches were burned. Our Church suffered only in the quake itself. The heavy bell in the tower fell and split

it in two. Part of the tower crashed through the roof of the Church. The interior, which had been carefully redecorated only a few months earlier, was of course badly damaged by the collapse of the roof. So great was the confusion and suffering following the earthquake that it was not until June 13 that the Trustees met to consider the repair of the building. Services had been held at the Century Club during these weeks of confusion and suffering when thousands of people had lost both their homes and their means of making a living. Residents of San Francisco who were present during these terrible days tell vivid tales of them. One man whose home lies a full two miles from the down town area tells of the terrible noise of falling buildings and later of the roaring flames. He says his first thought as he heard the noise and felt the trembling of the earth, was that the long predicted collision between the earth and a star had happened at last. He also describes the cities of tents which rose in the parks and in the open fields of the old Presidio, and of the wonderful spirit of goodwill and neighborliness which nearly all the people exhibited in those trying days. "It was as if the Kingdom of God had come among us," he says.

The Trustees of the Church were fortunate in that they still had a Church. Many other churches, the Congregational, the Episcopal Cathedral, the liberal Jewish Synagogue, Temple Emanuel, numerous Catholic Churches and many others were totally destroyed either by the quake itself or by the fire which followed. At a meeting of the Board on June 26 it was reported that wrecking the old tower was underway and that a letter had been received from the American Unitarian Association in Boston offering to pay the salaries of the Minister and Sexton for three months and to provide funds for the restoration of the Church. The offer was accepted and before the year was over the Church had been completely restored at a cost of some \$16,000, all of it contributed by the American Unitarian Association. The Congregation of Temple Emanuel used our building for its services during the period of the construction of its new temple. The Unitarian Headquarters was also located in our Church and the office of the Association's general relief program was also located there. The American Unitarian Association ex-

pended a total of nearly \$50,000 in general relief and aid to the churches and the people of the Bay Area during the months following the disaster. So far as I am able to find out, all of this was given freely. Payment was never asked . . . or received. So moved were the people of the San Francisco Church by this prompt generosity from Boston that they unanimously passed the following memorandum at the Church's annual meeting in February, 1907:

"To our Unitarian Brethren of the East: When the calamity of April overwhelmed our city in ruin, our generous Unitarian friends of the East came to our rescue through the medium of the American Unitarian Association, restored our beloved Church and tided us over the first bewildering months, a time of confusion and almost paralysis in our affairs. All this movement came from the generous impulse of their brotherly love, instantly, voluntarily, unsolicited by us.

"More than this they made us the almoners of their bounty to the general distress, so that we were able not only to relieve the wants of our own people, but to lighten the heart of many a stranger, many a suffering family among the great army of the destitute.

"Brethren of the Unitarian faith, no words of ours can convey our gratitude at this expression of your love overflowing from your generous hearts: its promptness, its spontaneity, its generosity have overwhelmed us.

"The Scripture says: 'It is better to give than to receive.' But to receive from such gracious givers and in such liberal measure, imposes on us a debt which we can only hope to repay by the warmest gratitude to you and a steadfast devotion to our common Liberal Faith.

"A. A. Smith, Moderator

"A. G. Eells, Clerk"

Our Society for Christian Work did a large amount of relief work during this period. In the first few weeks after the earthquake the record shows 5070 garments distributed and 1080 garments made by the Sewing Committee. Over \$2,000 was distributed from the Society's funds. The Minister, Mr. Leavitt, worked steadily and nobly throughout the

year. He headed the important relief committee and gave himself with complete devotion to the tasks of carrying on his ministry under very hard conditions and to administering the funds made available from Boston for general relief.

The earthquake brought severe problems to the Church and not only physical ones. The people were scattered by the disaster and many of them were homeless. What resources of time, energy and money they had left had to be devoted to the reconstruction of their own lives. The treasurer's reports during the ensuing years show a slight decline, but the Church continued strong and active.

In 1909, Mr. Bruce Porter, who still resides in San Francisco, presented to the Church the mural which now fills the chancel wall. It is the work of Mr. Porter and a memorial to Horatio Stebbins. It depicts the rising light of liberal religion as symbolized in three heroic size figures of Moses, Isaiah, and John the Evangelist. A recumbent woman symbolizes the dogmatic Christianity which is weary and without power to rise, until touched and converted by the new gospel.

Throughout Mr. Leavitt's ministry the Church, though beset by serious problems, prospered and grew in many respects. It is in this period, however, that deficits begin to be mentioned in the minutes and one can discern, in their beginnings, many of the problems which later became acute. For example, in 1909 Mr. Charles Murdock, who had for nearly fifty years been the leader of the Sunday School, was still the leader, though he had been made Honorary Superintendent some years earlier. There is a suggestion here of failure to create new and younger leaders for Church activities, a problem which still plagues the Church today. It is not for me to judge the total effect of Mr. Leavitt's ministry. From all that I can discover it was in most respects adequate and in some distinguished. He was a fine preacher, a man with a conscience which reached out into the community, and a man of social and religious vision. His resignation was submitted to the Society's annual meeting in February 1913 and accepted with sincere regret.

In his final sermon on April 27, 1913, Mr. Leavitt took for his text these words from I Corinthians: "Now I praise

you, Brethren . . .” He said: “St. Paul was a master of invective and he must have been tempted often to let himself go; to rebuke and sneer and thrust at those new converts, those faint-hearted followers. But his final decision to seal their remembrance of his instructions was: ‘Now I praise you . . .’”

“I came to you a young man, and that you, with your traditions and pictures of your former pastors in mind should have had something to forgive in me is simply to state a fact. I scarcely know what to name as a difference between us unless it be, perhaps, that we have differed, some of us, as to the amount of encouragement a minister needs in order to work at all.”

There is a tragedy implied between these lines which few still remember and most will never know. On the positive side it must never be forgotten that Mr. Leavitt served the Church during one of its most critical periods with fidelity and distinction.

III

On May 11, 1913 the Trustees voted to extend an invitation to the Rev. C. S. S. Dutton of Brooklyn to become minister of the Church. The call was duly extended and Mr. Dutton accepted on May 28 and assumed his duties on the first Sunday in September of the same year. It is understandably difficult for me to attempt to write the history of the Church during the ministry of my living Minister Emeritus. As it happens he himself is working upon this task now and will have prepared, by the date of the Church's one hundredth anniversary observance in October, 1950, a paper on this subject which will obviously be more significant and detailed than anything I might write. I shall, therefore, confine myself to a few very general observations and some factual matters which I have gleaned from the Minutes of the Church during this period.

Mr. Dutton's ministry began with a new sense of the relationship of Church to Minister. It is notable that within a week or two of his arrival in San Francisco he met with the Trustees to outline his policies and plans. One of these policies was completely new to the Church and reversed a custom which, I understand, still prevails in some of our churches.

Mr. Dutton "expressed a wish to be present at the meetings of the Board." The Board passed a resolution that: "Mr. Dutton is welcome at all meetings of the Trustees." Mr. Dutton also expressed his desire for a Church secretary. This, the Board "took under advisement." Evening services were planned for a period of months and committees were appointed to plan Mr. Dutton's installation and several social gatherings.

It is interesting too that early in Dr. Dutton's ministry there appear concrete evidences of his own and the Church's concern for matters of political and international importance. Late in 1913 the Board approved and Dr. Dutton duly read in Church several resolutions "covering the suspension of warship building by the various governments, and especially by our own government and resolutions of various congregations and other organizations looking towards treaties of arbitration, etc." The Board suggested that Dr. Dutton "read them to the congregation and say they would be signed if there was no serious objection." Apparently this mixing of the Church in politics was duly carried out, and the Church survived. The Annual Meeting of 1914 reveals a Church in sound condition with a vigorous new ministry just getting under way. A Church Council with representatives from all church organizations had been formed. Evening forums had been planned. Monthly bulletins were mailed out. Curious items appear however. Apparently there was a Church secretary, but during this year she was paid not by the Church but by Dr. Dutton personally. At the same meeting the Board voted to re-imburse Mr. Dutton for expenses incurred in paying the secretary's salary. Small details of this sort are important because they represent the struggles of an established institution to readjust itself to a new program of a world of rapid and drastic transition. This single problem seems to me to account for most of the difficulties which the Church has faced in the 20th century. Born in a situation where men were largely preoccupied with the attainment of wealth as quickly as possible, it shared in the wealth and success of those days. Blessed in the ministers of its first half-century it became old and satisfied too soon. As the dynamic history of the 20th century, the First World War,

the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the Second World War, unfolded, it found itself without the necessary flexibility to meet the changing demands of the times. Like so many other of our conservative people and institutions, with the best will and intention in the world, the Church continued to apply old remedies to new situations and to be discouraged when the treatment did not work. As a general observation, subject to revision upon further experience and knowledge, it seems to me that an institution, as it approaches the age of one hundred is likely to feel much older and behave more inflexibly than an institution which has two or three hundred years behind it. To reduce this observation to the scale of human life, the adolescent is usually conservative and conformist while the person in his twenties is likely to be liberal and experimental in his attitudes, because he feels more secure.

For all this, the past decade, which has admittedly been a difficult one for all concerned, should not be permitted to hide the strength and vision of the first 25 years of Mr. Dutton's ministry. He is a scholar of real depth, a preacher of power, conservative, by Unitarian standards, in a theological sense, but boldly and steadily liberal in his social and political views. It is my personal impression that in his ministry he gave the Church more advanced intellectual leadership than many of its people were able to understand or follow. At the same time he gave important and vigorous leadership in the community. He was one of the founders of the Community Chest of San Francisco. Among the clergy of the city, he has taken the lead, often alone, in the fight to preserve the separation of Church and State, by preventing all encroachments of clericalism upon the public schools or other public agencies. He and Mrs. Dutton are deeply in the hearts of many people of the Church and of the community. I may add from personal experience and acquaintance that he has been a most wise, considerate, and kindly Minister-Emeritus during my first months in the San Francisco Church.

As for the present state of the Church, it is too early to form judgments of any real value. Some significant changes have been made. A new set of By-Laws has been adopted which curtails the power of the Trustees and vests

more power in the Congregation and the various working committees of the Church. It is notable that until these By-Laws were adopted the power to call and dismiss ministers was vested not, as is usual in our polity, in the congregation, but in the Board of Trustees. Likewise the power to amend the By-Laws of the Church was also, until February 1950, in the hands of the Trustees. The third basic change has been the abolition of the pew-rental system and the inauguration of the pledge system of church financing. This change was, so far as I know, first called for by the Moderator of the Church, Mr. Bruce Cornwall, in his report to the Annual Meeting in 1927. The suggestion was not accepted then. It has been accepted now and has already proved its worth.

The Church confronts its second century with many problems but also with many opportunities. Our building is not well-adapted to the needs of a modern Church program. We are not located in a favorable position in terms of the community as it now is. Very few of our people come from within a mile of the Church. On the other hand, our location is part of the first tract of land which the city has planned for urban redevelopment and should this plan be carried through we shall find ourselves in the midst of a new and modern middle-income residential area. This should provide us with many potential Unitarians in the neighborhood as well as with the challenge of an important community task in terms of education and recreation. Except for The Fellowship Church of All Peoples, of which Dr. Howard Thurman is Minister, our Church is the only one in the city with a distinctly liberal point of view in theology. This is a sufficient challenge to any group of people, and to any minister.

One more aspect of the Church's past and present needs to be mentioned. It is impossible to study the records of the Church without being impressed by the numerous large bequests which it has received over the years from concerned and generous members. They take up more pages of the minutes than any other subject. A recent audit of all these funds has revealed that almost all of them are severely restricted as to principal and many as to income as well. The sum total is that the Church as a Church is not rich as so

many seem to think. We have as a matter of fact at this moment a little over \$4,000 in unrestricted endowments. The remainder is restricted for the most part, for "charitable purposes." This places the Church today in a curious position. It has large sums of money available to spend on others. It has little to spend on itself and its own program which it does not raise by the sweat and faithful labor of its own people. You might say we thought we had a fairy godmother, but when the auditor was through with us, she turned out to be somebody else's godmother. On the whole, however, this is not a disaster. The Church is on its own and must do whatever it does by dint of its own efforts. We can draw no longer on the capital which our predecessors accumulated. Since this is true, we may well hope that it will not be necessary for us to repeat their mistakes either.

The Unitarian Church of San Francisco is today in a position more like that in which it was in the early years. It has its own way to make by the vigor of its ideas and the usefulness of its program. It has, I am persuaded, a future, but that future will be the creation of the people who are in it. They will be less hampered spiritually because less indebted financially to the ways of the past. They have a harder task in some ways, but on the whole a more challenging and rewarding one.

* * *

SOURCE MATERIALS FOR THIS PAPER

Records of the Proceedings of the Trustees, Congregation, and various organizations of the First Unitarian Society of San Francisco.

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Sermons and Addresses of Thomas Starr King.

Heralds of a Liberal Faith, Volumes II and III, edited by Samuel A. Eliot.

Charles W. Wendte, Thomas Starr King, Patriot and Preacher.

Charles W. Wendte, The Wider Fellowship.

In memory of Thomas Starr King, a Discourse by Henry W. Bellows delivered in the First Unitarian Church of San Francisco, May 1, 1864.

Charles A. Murdock, Horatio Stebbins, His Ministry and Personality.

Horace Davis, Fifty Years of the First Unitarian Church of San Francisco.

Wallace W. Robbins, "Charles A. Farley, Messenger of Liberalism," Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society, Volume VI, Part I, 1938.

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Franklin Tuthill, History of California, 1866.

Since this paper was written the Church has published: One Hundred Years of the First Unitarian Church of San Francisco, 1850-1950, by the Church History Committee, October, 1950, pp. 50.

Apostolic Succession

By FREDERICK L. WEIS

In 1751, the Hon. Paul Dudley left by will a fund to support an annual lectureship in Harvard College. One of the four subjects specified was "The Validity of Presbyterian (or Congregational) Ordination."

As in the case of the members of the Society of Friends, the average Unitarian considers good works, character, integrity of mind and heart, benevolence and the inner light of more importance in the sight of God than the sacraments. Still, by disposition and inheritance, he does cherish baptism, marriage, communion and ordination. They have for him a deep religious significance in the sense of personal dedication or consecration. He believes that a child of Christian parents should be admitted to the universal Christian church by christening, that marriage should be performed, when possible, under the auspices of the church, that the eucharist is a reminder of the lovable personality of Jesus, and that by ordination one chosen by the congregation of a church is set apart to serve that church in ways wherewith he may best be qualified. All these, let us hope, are outward manifestations of an indwelling grace, a condition perfectly natural and wholesome for every child of God.

There are those who, through misinformation, often consider that our ministers are not properly ordained. Yet we have consistently used the ancient practices of the Christian church in these services. The prayer of ordination, the homily, the right hand of fellowship, the charge to the minister, and the laying on of hands, have been used regularly among us in New England at ordinations since 1629.

But the most interesting, though generally unknown, fact concerning the ordination of most Unitarian ministers in America is that they share, actually as well as traditionally, in the identical apostolic succession claimed by the Anglican and Roman churches, as well as that of the earliest Congregational churches of New England.

This may be illustrated by a single line back to the 15th century when all Christians of western Europe belonged to the Church of Rome. The particular line selected goes back to England through Richard Mather of Dorchester, 1636, who was ordained at Toxteth, Lancashire, on Nov. 30, 1618, by

the Right Rev. Thomas Moreton, D.D., Bishop of Chester. (Life and Death of Richard Mather, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1670; 1850 edition, p. 48).

By means of existing church records, by way of more than 600 New England clergymen, the present writer has traced, through Dr. Lord, 11,906 different lines to Richard Mather; 2,508 to John Eliot, the apostle to the Indians; 1,208 to John Wilson, first minister of the First Church in Boston; and hundreds of other lines to the founders of the first churches of New England. For example, again through Dr. Lord, 1,719 lines have been traced to Richard Mather through Dr. Christopher R. Eliot; 1,536 through Dr. Charles C. Everett to Mr. Mather; and through Dr. Andrew P. Peabody, 1,780 lines to the same source. These lines are still easily traced because New England is extraordinarily fortunate in the preservation of its town and church records for more than three centuries. Moreover, through diaries, newspapers, printed sermons, Harvard College records and other sources, meticulous details of hundreds of our ordination services have been preserved.

In the single line given here, the person next below took part in the ordination of the one mentioned in the line above him.

1. AUGUSTUS MENDON LORD, D.D., ord. Arlington, Sept. 22, 1887.
2. p HENRY WILDER FOOTE, A.M., ord. King's Chapel, Dec. 21, 1861.
3. p JAMES WALKER, D.D., LL.D., ord. Charlestown, April 15, 1818.
4. c THADDEUS MASON HARRIS, D.D., ord. Dorchester, Oct. 23, 1793.
5. c NATHANIEL ROBBINS, A.M., ord. Milton, Feb. 11, 1750/1.
6. s EBENEZER TURREL, A.M., ord. Medford, Nov. 25, 1724.
7. r NATHANIEL APPLETON, D.D., ord. Cambridge, Oct. 9, 1717.
8. r COTTON MATHER, D.D., ord. Boston II, May 13, 1685.
9. c INCREASE MATHER, D.D., ord. Boston II, May 27, 1664.
10. c RICHARD MATHER, A.B., ord. Toxteth, Lancashire, Nov. 30, 1618.
11. THOMAS MORETON, D.D., ord. 1582, Bsp. of Chester, Littlefield and Durham.

Bishop Moreton's ordination derives from Matthew Parker, who was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, Dec. 17, 1559, by William Barlow, Bishop of Bath and Wells, St. David's and Chichester, Miles Coverdale, John Scory, and Bishop John

Hodgson. Archbishop Parker, from whom the subsequent ordinations of the Anglican church are all derived, is the founder of the present Anglican succession, but he also shares in the Roman succession as well. Dr. Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, and first translator of the whole Bible into English, was ordained priest at Norwich by John Nix, who in turn was ordained by Henry Deane, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, 1500. John Scory, Bishop of Rochester, was ordained by Thomas Cranmer, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, consecrated March 30, 1533, and confirmed by Pope Clement VII. By this means Mather, Moreton and Parker partake of the apostolic succession claimed by the Roman Church back to St. Peter, the disciple of Jesus.

Perhaps the reader may say: "All this is true. But what of it?" Naturally, it is of no particular consequence. It is, however, interesting as showing—(though we do not hold the faith of Rome, nor of the Episcopal church, nor even that of John Calvin)—that, by ecclesiastical heritage, our ministers trace back through the same apostolic succession to the early Christian church in much the same way that many of us trace back our heritage through more than three centuries to the founders of the Puritan churches of Massachusetts, and earlier still, to the original church of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Annual Meeting 1950

The Fiftieth Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society was held in King's Chapel, Boston, May 23, 1950, at 10:30 o'clock, the President, Dr. Frederick L. Weis, presiding. The Secretary's report of the last annual meeting was read and approved.

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Auditor, Mr. Gorham Dana, gave the Treasurer's report showing a balance of \$704.98 on hand, as well as the sum of \$500 in the Life Membership Fund on deposit at the Cambridge Savings Bank. The report was accepted and placed on file.

Mr. Dana than made the following suggestions, first, that a list of members be prepared and kept up to date, one for the Secretary and one for the Treasurer; second, that the Treasurer have charge of notifying members once a year of dues and follow up the payment thereof; and third, that in order to increase membership a circular letter be sent to all Unitarian ministers asking them for names of parishioners who might be interested in joining, including members of local committees on Church history.

The Secretary having informed the meeting that the first suggestion had already been attended to, it was voted that the other two suggestions be adopted. Applications for membership have been sent out to persons interested.

The Rev. Bradford E. Gale, for the Nominating Committee, brought in the following list of nominees who were duly elected to their respective offices:

Rev. Frederick Lewis Weis, Th.D., President
Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, D.D., Vice-President
Rev. John Henry Wilson, Secretary
Dudley Huntington Dorr, Esq., Treasurer

For Directors for three years, Miss Harriet E. Johnson and Rev. Dana McLean Greeley, thus making the list of Directors as follows:

Rev. Dan Huntington Fenn	1948-1951
Miss Helen W. Greenwood	1948-1951
Mr. Carleton Potter Small	1949-1952
Rev. Robert Dale Richardson	1949-1952
Miss Harriet Elizabeth Johnson	1950-1953
Rev. Dana McLean Greeley	1950-1953

For Nominating Committee for 1951: Rev. Robert A. Storer, Mr. Alfred P. Putnam, Miss Helen W. Greenwood.

The other officers were re-elected as follows:

Rev. Earl Morse Wilbur, D.D., Hon. Vice-President

Rev. Charles Edwards Park, D.D., Hon. Vice-President

Mrs. Martha Denham Watts, Librarian

Gorham Dana, Esq., Auditor

The President paid tribute to the memory of Dr. Louis Craig Cornish and spoke of his kindness, his love of the cause of Unitarianism the world over, his loyalty and devotion to all good works and to the interests of our society, and expressed our deep sense of loss in his recent death.

The Rev. Earl Morse Wilbur, D.D., of Berkeley, California, gave a very vivid account of his labor and travel through Europe and America to obtain material for his monumental History of Unitarianism. His address was listened to with an absorbing interest by a large audience.

The second address, "The First Unitarian Society of San Francisco, 1850-1950," was briefly presented by the Rev. Harry C. Meserve of the Unitarian Church in San Francisco.

At the close of the meeting it was announced that both addresses would be published in full in the next issue of the Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society and a number of those present were admitted to the Society. The meeting adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN HENRY WILSON,
Secretary

*The
Proceedings of the Unitarian
Historical Society*

*VOLUME IX
PART II*

The First Parish of Framingham, 1701-1951

John McKinstry Merriam

*The First Congregational Parish in Kennebunk, Maine,
1750-1951*

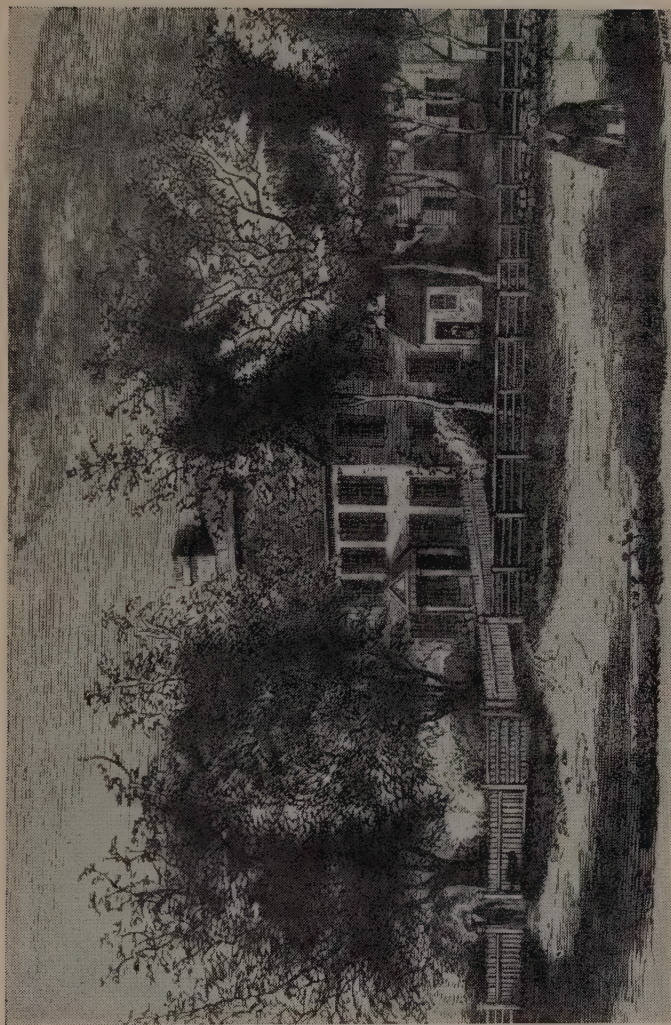
Melville C. Freeman

Annual Meeting

Samuel Atkins Eliot, D.D., LL.D.

1952

25 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts



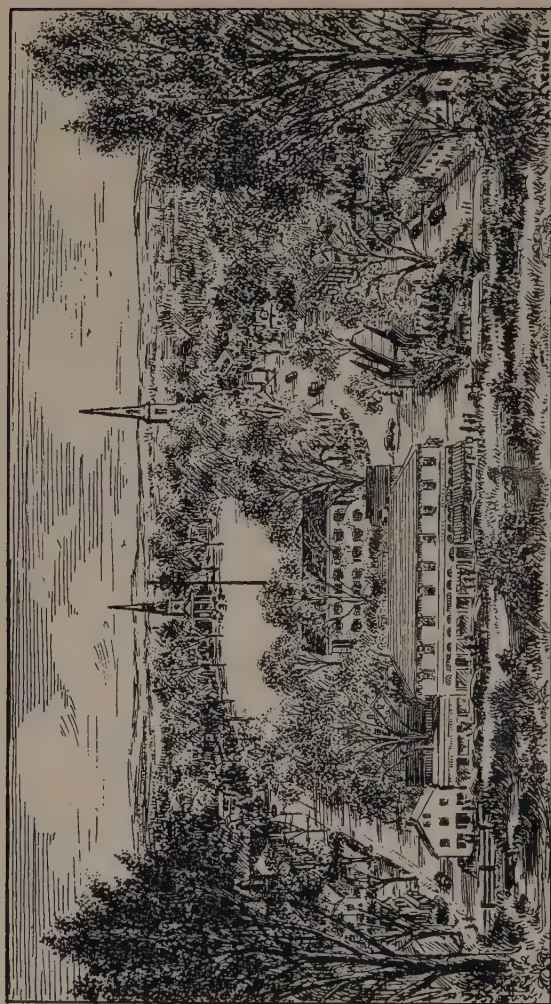
Mansion of Rev. Matthew Bridge, built in 1747



View of Framingham (Centre) Common 1808. Originally painted by Daniel Bell, later lithographed.



Framingham in 1841



View of Framingham Centre Common 1950. Town of Framingham Incorporated 1700.

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The Proceedings
of the
Unitarian Historical Society

Volume IX

Part II

1952

Illustrations

Mansion of Rev. Matthew Bridge, built in 1747.

View of Framingham (Centre) Common, 1808.

Framingham in 1841.

View of Framingham Common, 1950.

Second Meetinghouse of the First Parish in Kennebunk, built
in 1773.

The views of Framingham, 1808 and 1950, are used here through
the kindness of the artist, Miss Margaret M. Kendall.

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The Unitarian Historical Society

List of Officers, 1951-1952

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Dublin, New Hampshire

HONORARY

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Rev. Charles E. Park, D.D.
First Church in Boston

VICE-PRESIDENT

Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, D.D.
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Rev. Earl M. Wilbur, D.D.
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Rev. John Henry Wilson
Wilton, N. H.

Miss Harriet E. Johnson
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TREASURER

Dudley Huntington Dorr, Esq.
60 State Street, Boston 9

LIBRARIAN

Mrs. Martha Denham Watts
25 Beacon Street
Boston 8, Massachusetts

DIRECTORS

Carleton Potter Small, of Portland, Me.	1949-1952
Rev. Robert Dale Richardson, of Concord	1950-1952
Rev. Dana McLean Greeley, of Boston	1950-1953
Rev. Dan Huntington Fenn, of Tucson, Arizona	1951-1954
Miss Helen W. Greenwood, of Leominster	1951-1954
Rev. George Huntston Williams, Th.D., of Cambridge	1952-1953

The Unitarian Historical Society was founded in 1901 to collect and preserve books, pamphlets, periodicals, manuscripts and pictures which describe and illustrate the history of Unitarianism; to stimulate an interest in the preservation of the records of Unitarian churches; and to publish material dealing with the history of individual churches, or of the Unitarian movement as a whole.

The Society welcomes to its membership all who are in sympathy with its aims and work. Persons desiring to join will send the annual membership fee of Two Dollars, with their names and addresses, to the Treasurer, or Fifty Dollars for life membership. Each member receives a copy of the Proceedings. About 125 copies are sent to Libraries.

The First Parish of Framingham

1701 to 1951

By JOHN McKINSTRY MERRIAM*

Framingham incorporated as a "township" June 25, 1700, and John Swift ordained as the first pastor of the church "embodied" therein October 8, 1701:—These are the events locally significant occurring 250 years ago, as the beginning of our town and parish history. They are of meaningful historical association. Framingham recognized the birth period of the civic town last June in a program very well planned and executed and now we have come together in historic King's Chapel in Boston under the auspices of the Unitarian Historical Society to review the history of the religious parish.

The area of Framingham was midway between earlier settlements. To the northwest were Sudbury and "Marlbury" and to the southeast Natick and "Sherborne." In the 1690's, a distinct settlement had developed midway increasing to some 64 dwellings with "over 300 souls." A movement for a new town was started in 1697, resulting in an order to plot the land, and John Gore, a sworn surveyor was selected for this purpose and presented a plan in October 1699 of which I have a photostatic copy. He was a great-great-uncle of Christopher Gore in whose memory we have the beautiful mansion in Waltham. The legends written in his hand on the original copy are: by way of title "This Plot represents the form and quantity of a parcel of land commonly called Framingham as it was taken and finished in October 1699 in the laying down and measuring whereof, one inch contained 200 rods. These spots in the Plott representing the several houses already built there." pr. John Gore, Surveyor. And then by way of description, in the upper right-hand corner, "From Framingham Meeting House to Sudbury Meeting House is seven miles and 84 rods and the remotest of Sudbury Farms between these places is not above two miles and a half distant from Framingham Meeting House, and is four miles and three-quarters from the Sudbury Meeting House;" and in the lower right-hand corner, "From Framingham Meeting House to the Sherborne Meeting House is five miles and one-quarter and the nearest of Framingham inhabitants is three miles and one-quarter distant therefrom and two miles from Framingham Meeting House."

*A paper read before the Unitarian Historical Society, 1951.

And with this plan a petition was presented, “. . . To his Excellency, Richard, Earl of Bellemont, Capt. General and Governor in Chief of his Maj. Province of the Mass. Bay in N. England, etc., and the Honored Court now assembled in Boston.

“We underwritten, do humbly petition, that agreeable to our former petition to the Honored Court, (relating to a township), we may now be heard in a few things . . . ”

This is a well-argued brief following through eight numbered paragraphs, concluding, “. . . Finally if any of Sherborne or any other town, shall pretend anything to the Honored Court, which may lead to the hindrance of a grant of our petition . . . we humbly petition that we may have admittance to speak for ourselves.”

The third paragraph is of special reference to our subject and I quote it in full: “Inasmuch as that for a long time we have lain under a heavy burden, as to our attendance on the Publick Worship of God, so that for the most part our going to meeting to other places on the Sabbath, is our hardest day’s work in the week; and by reason of these difficulties that attend us therein, we are forced to leave many at home, especially our children, where to our grief, the Sabbath is too much profaned; and being desirous to sanctify the Sabbath as to the duty of rest required, as far as we can with convenience; these motives moving us, we have unanimously built a Meeting House, and have a minister among us, and we now humbly petition to your Honours, to countenance our present proceedings.” And the answer to this petition in the following June was the Charter of the Town.

It is thus a matter of record that there was a meeting house in this Township before October 1699, begun probably in 1698 and finished in the early months of 1699. The rough sketch on the Gore Plan shows the location on the crest of the hill referred to later as “Church Hill,” a building two stories high with wide spreading roof facing South. The exact location is now marked by suitable marker in what is known as the Old Burial Ground.

John Swift of Milton had already come as a temporary minister. He was one of 14 graduates of Harvard in the Class of 1697 and had been favorably recommended as a "person well qualified for the work of the ministry" by a committee of three ordained ministers, and on May 22, 1701, the town voted to call him "to abide and settle with us as our legal minister." He was in his twenty-third year. He had given the matter consideration and was accepted and ordained October 8. He married Sarah Tileston of Dorchester and came here for his life work as the first minister of Framingham, continuing until his death through forty-five years of earnest service. Grants were made to him for land as a home and towards his livelihood, with money salary of 60 lbs., and with the town to supply his firewood.

In a paper written by Walter Adams, prepared for the Centennial Exercises of the Saxonville Methodist Church, there is this description of this First Meeting House: "This Meeting House was 40 feet long, by 30 feet wide, was boarded and clapboarded without, but not painted. It was unfinished within, and for some years was furnished only with rough benches for seats. There was no cellar under it, and it was minus any heating facilities whatever. The day even of a foot stove was not yet. In truth and fact the First Meeting House in Framingham was nothing but a barn, and such a barn as would today be considered hardly fit for the housing of cattle. Yet in such a barrack through Summer's heat and Winter's cold — cold at times so intense that, as Mr. Swift records, 'Ye Communion Bread froze and rattled in ye plate,' John Swift's parishioners listened to his preaching and John Swift, an able, learned, scholarly, charitable, godly man, expounded the word and strove by his teaching to guide his flock into the way of salvation, and to keep them from straying therefrom."

A very significant record of the service of John Swift is contained in a diary of which Walter Adams gave a very full summary in the exercises marking the dedication of a memorial tablet on the site of the Swift Home on Maple Street. The original diary cannot now be placed and this description is most fortunate: "It begins with Dec. 30, 1716, and ends

with July 14, 1728, and consists of 414 closely written pages, each 3 and 7/16 inches long by 2 and 7/16 inches wide. Superficially examined, this diary appears to be merely a record of the texts from which the writer preached from Sunday to Sunday, of baptisms and admissions to the Church, and other ecclesiastical incidents, varied occasionally by notices of passing events, but carefully and sympathetically studied, it is full of interest and enables us to draw many a mental picture of the writer and his surroundings, and to form an opinion of John Swift's mind and character."

From this diary we also learn that peace did not abide in the church. There were contentions and strifes; and traditions preserved for us by one of the historians of Framingham inform us that these strifes and contentions were bitter and grievous and a source of great anxiety and trouble to Mr. Swift, and must have contributed to hasten his declining health. But of these the less said the better, especially in view of the fact that in a few references to them occurring in his diary, Mr. Swift mentions no names, and registers no complaints or comments. Another source of grief, care and anxiety to Mr. Swift, never mentioned, however, in his diary, was the insanity of his wife, who long before his death became demented, and so remained to the end of her life.

Mr. Adams continues:—"There is not in Mr. Swift's diary a single uncharitable, unkind or disrespectful word about any one. He records facts and leaves them to speak for themselves. Of himself he records, with very few exceptions, only such things as pertain to his official work and duties. Not once does he indulge in an expression savouring of self-satisfaction, self-importance, or self-righteousness. Occasionally there is written an entry entirely in Latin, the more to emphasize the importance of the event recorded."

In the diary of Cotton Mather we find an interesting reference to these troubles against which John Swift struggled so manfully. Under date of August 14, 1718, Mather writes, "G. D." (referring to the Good Devised for the day) "Divisions and Confusions at Framlingham" (a rare instance of the correct spelling of the name of the mother town in Suffolk, England) "call for my best Endeavours to bring them unto a

Period." This would seem to indicate that Mather had come to Framingham for a conference on the spot with Swift but just what suggestion he had left we do not know.

In 1743, a Town Meeting was held to provide some method to help Mr. Swift, he being unable to preach; and in 1745 the end came. We have no account of the funeral, but the burial was where the pulpit of the first church had stood. The Town provided a "decent tombstone" on which was inscribed the following epitaph in Latin:

"Here lies the Reverend John Swift, who died in 1745, April 24th, in the 67th year of his age. Adorned with gifts both native and acquired; he was a master in the art of teaching; a model of living, conforming all his acts to the divine laws. To all those with whom he had to do, he exhibited the wisdom of the serpent and the innocence of the dove. While living, he was very much beloved, and he left at death a grateful, though mournful memory to his friends. Through many scenes and trials, and even unto death, he manifested a rare discretion, modesty, patience and submission to the Divine Will. He at length rests with the Lord, looking for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body."

This tombstone unfortunately had disappeared in the lapse of time and a simple horizontal slab now marks the grave, referring to it however as the spot where the pulpit stood in the First Meeting House where he preached for the period of 35 years. During the last 10 years of his service, a second Meeting House had been provided, located after considerable discussion and disagreement near the northeasterly corner of the land which soon became the Centre Common. And this house was raised, "following a vote by the town that the committee procure one barrel of rum, three barrels of cider, six barrels of beer, with suitable provision of meat, bread, etc., for such and only such as labor in raising the Meeting House." There is this description in Temple's History:

"In size, this house was fifty-five by forty-two feet, and thirty feet between joints. It had three stories, with doors on the front side, and at the east and west ends. 150 pounds more were granted to build the house, making 550 pounds the cost of finishing the outside—though it was not painted till 1772. The sum of 350 lbs. was granted at different times for finishing the inside of the house. The pulpit was on the north side, and double galleries extended around the other three sides. The committee was instructed to build a pulpit, a body of long seats below, leaving an alley between the men's and women's seats, lay the floors, make seats in the lower gallery, and two pairs of stairs (men's and

women's) to said gallery. The space next the walls under the galleries was reserved for pews. The ministerial pew was the first on the left hand side of the pulpit; and a pew in the northeast corner was reserved for the town's use."

It is fitting to close the record of Mr. Swift's service by quoting this obituary notice which appeared in the Boston Evening Post on May 13, 1745:

"On the 24th of the last month, died, at Framingham, after a long indisposition, the Rev. Mr. John Swift, the first Pastor of the church in Framingham, in the 67th year of his age, and the 45th of his ministry. As he was a gentleman of considerable natural powers, so he acquired a considerable degree of human knowledge and useful learning. He particularly excelled in rhetoric and oratory, and as a critic in the Greek language. His piety was sincere and eminent. His preaching was sound and Evangelical. As a pastor, he was diligent, faithful and prudent; and in his conversation, he was sober, grave, and profitable, yet affable, courteous and pleasant. When he received injuries at any time, he bore them with singular discretion and meekness; and the various trials and sorrows with which he was exercised, especially in the latter part of his life, gave occasion for showing forth his wisdom, humility, patience and resignation to the Divine will. He was had in high esteem by the Association to which he belonged."

The selection of a successor was a matter of some difficulty. Two calls were given by the Church but the Town non-concurred. On December 2nd, however, the Church and the Town concurred in calling Matthew Bridge, a graduate of Harvard, as one of a class of twenty-five in the year 1741. He accepted and was duly ordained February 19, 1745, and provision was made for the entertainment of the minister and messengers at the home of Joseph Stone, the building now known as the Abner Wheeler House on the Turnpike. There was, however, serious division resulting in the signing of a protest that the following doctrines were omitted or slightly touched upon in his sermons:

"Particularly the doctrine of Original Sin; the Imputation of it; the total loss of the Image of God in the fall of Adam; the wrath and curse of God consequent thereon; the Freeness and Sovereignty of Divine Grace in electing some to everlasting life, and the provision made in the way of the New Covenant for their salvation by Jesus Christ; the Nature and Necessity of Regeneration, and an Almighty Power of the Spirit of God for the production of the New Creature, and re-

newing the Image of God upon the Soul in Sanctification; the nature of that Faith whereby the Souls of Believers were united to Christ; the way of the sinner's Justification by the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ; as also those discriminating doctrines which shew the difference between that Faith, that Repentance, and that Obedience, which is merely legal, superficial, and servile, and that which is evangelical. On this account, we desire that this venerable council will consider us as wholly dissenting in the settlement and ordination of Mr. Bridge." This bears 33 signatures, a very considerable body.

The matter of acceptance must have been a difficult matter for this young man of 24 years, coming to his first parish. He came from a prominent family in Cambridge and Lexington, a great-grandson of John Bridge, the first Deacon in the history of New Towne, who is memorized by a statue on the Cambridge common. He had married Anna Danforth, the daughter of Nicholas, who came from Framlingham, England, with his six motherless children, and contributed outstanding lines of descendants towards the development of the Bay Colony, among them this minister, and later James Abram Garfield, President of the United States.

As a result of this division, a second church was established which later became the First Baptist Church of Framingham. In spite of this division, however, Mr. Bridge proved acceptable through a long period of service. His association with the prominent Cambridge family led to his meeting Washington when he came to Cambridge as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, and served as a Chaplain. His death came September 2, 1775, resulting from exposure in the camp in Cambridge. While in Framingham, he built in 1747 the old Gambrel-roofed house on Kellogg Street, and occupied this house until his death. I have this picture of the house taken many years ago.

Calvin Stebbins, to whom I shall refer later, in his historic address fifty years ago, refers to Mr. Bridge as follows:

"He was a man of striking personal appearance and of mild and amiable disposition, but he was not 'a peace-at-all-price man.' At times he seems to have been inspired by the

real spirit of the church militant, in the literal sense of the word. When the difficulties between the mother country and these colonies grew serious his patriotism rose with the danger, and when the appeal to arms came he heard it and was among the first of his cloth to volunteer as chaplain. It is said that at the ever memorable scene at Cambridge, on the 3rd of July, 1775, the place assigned to him was beside General Washington under the old elm. (Bridge, Genealogy, 16.) Whatever the emotions that moved the hearts of those brave men, they could not have realized the full import of the scene they then witnessed, or have divined its real significance."

And there is this obituary notice in the Boston Gazette of September, 1775:

"On Saturday Morning the 3d Instant departed this Life, the Rev. Mr. Matthew Bridge of Framingham, in the 55th year of his Age, and near the 30th of his Ministry. In him were found the true friend and sincere Christian. His affable Temper, and free familiar Disposition, rendered him sociable and agreeable to his Acquaintance and connections. He left a disconsolate Widow and five Children, together with the affectionate People of his Charge, to lament the insupportable Loss. His Remains were decently interred the last Monday."

Following his death, for several years the Parish was without a settled minister. On January 10, 1781, Rev. David Kellogg, graduate of Dartmouth College, was ordained minister. He came to Framingham and married Sally, the daughter of Matthew Bridge, and lived in the Bridge house until his death, so the house today is known as the Kellogg house.

He was a man of ability and devotion to his ministerial duties, of outstanding personality and also a real leader in the social and religious life of the Town. His service is summarized by Mr. Temple as follows:

"Rev. Dr. Kellogg performed the full duties of the ministry to his people for fifty years, lacking four months; and, after the settlement of a colleague, he continued to preach, as occasion offered or required until his 84th year; sometimes supplying vacant pulpits in neighboring parishes, and often

assisting the junior pastor at home. And till his last sickness, he was always in his place in the pulpit on the Lord's day. He died Aug. 13, 1843, aged 87 years, 9 mos."

"In personal appearance Dr. Kellogg was more than ordinarily prepossessing. In stature he was above the medium height; with a well-proportioned and muscular frame; a fresh yet placid countenance; strongly marked features, expressive of an even temperament, good sense, decision and benevolence. His general bearing combined dignity with ease; his step was firm, his presence commanding. His was, in the best sense, a Christian gentleman of the old school." See him as he stands in the gateway of this picture.

"Dr. Kellogg possessed intellectual powers of a high order. There was always a naturalness and healthy vigor, and a cheerful tone in his thoughts. And in this, his mental powers exactly correspond with his bodily powers. He was an active, cheerful man. From the time he commenced his professional studies till he left the active duties of the ministry, he rose in the morning at daybreak; and was busy and systematic in the use of time. He was always punctual. 'It is doubtful,' says a member of his family, 'whether, in the whole course of his public life, he ever met an appointment five minutes late.'"

There are two interesting anecdotes which I think I can refer to without detracting from his merit. He was a man of temperate habits, but not a teetotaler, and at the time of a temperance revival he was asked to sign a pledge. He was reluctant, however, stating that he felt that an occasion might come when he needed some alcoholic stimulant. This objection was met by the statement that he could have this upon the advice of a physician. Then, his reply was, "All right, I will sign the pledge, but with this understanding: that I am to be my own physician." Another time on some wintry night before he had signed the pledge, I take it, he came into the tavern and said to the bartender, shrugging his shoulders, "Mix us up some toddy and make it good and strong," and then a few days later he remarked to the barkeeper, "That was a strong drink you gave me," adding he got home only with some difficulty. And the bartender said to him, "Do you

know what you said the other night?" "No, what did I say," the minister replied. "You said mix us up some toddy, make it good and strong, and then you took it all!"

There is this summary of the ministry of Dr. Kellogg in Barry's History: "After a protracted ministry of about half a century, Dr. Kellogg voluntarily retired from his pastoral office, about the month of September 1830; after which he continued for many years to reside upon his estate, in the enjoyment of a vigorous and 'green old age.' Many will recall with pleasure, his venerable form, slightly bowed, his tall and robust figure, his fresh yet placid countenance, his dignified and courteous manners, as he moved among us, almost sole survivor of the generation who had welcomed him to the sacred office, as their Christian pastor and guide. Within a year before his decease, occurred an incident expressive of the honorable estimation in which he was held by the inhabitants of the town. May, 1843, members of all the religious societies united in a tea-party, at the town hall, at which he was invited to meet them. His appearance was greeted with a warm welcome; and he improved the occasion to enforce sentiments of mutual toleration and Christian harmony, worthy of durable remembrance."

Thus, we have reviewed the record of these three ministers, a service altogether from 1701 to 1843, a period of one hundred and forty-two years, young men coming to their first parish and remaining through the entire period of their lives, a most unusual record, surely not equalled by any nearby community.

In the later years of the Kellogg ministry there came the Unitarian movement, resulting in the division of the church life continued in part by the First Parish Unitarian, and by the so-called orthodox church organization through the record of the Plymouth Church to the present time. The leading Unitarian preachers were William Ellery Channing and Theodore Parker, but the teacher was Henry Ware, the Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard. He was a native of Sherborn, a nearby town which had been and continued to be the family home and must have had association with Framingham. Thomas Hollis of London in some way had become interested

in the new college at Cambridge, and had founded the two first professorships, that of Divinity and of Mathematics. In the Ware Genealogy there is this account of Henry Ware:

In 1805, "In the forty-first year of his age, he was elected to the chair of the Hollis Professorship of Divinity in Harvard College; he was inaugurated on May 14th, and removed to Cambridge in June. This election marks an era in the history of the Congregational churches in New England. It was vehemently opposed by a portion of the clergy and other leading men, on the ground that Mr. Ware's theology was of so liberal a character that it was not right to place him in a professorship intended to inculcate and maintain Calvinistic doctrines. As a matter of fact, Thomas Hollis of London, England, had founded the professorship in 1719, was not a Calvinist but a very liberal Baptist, who had required in his deed of gift only that his professor should 'believe in the Scriptures as the only perfect rule of faith and manners,' and should promise to 'explain the Scriptures with integrity and uprightness, according to the best light that God shall give him.' Mr. Ware took no part in the controversies occasioned by his appointment until 1820, by the advice of friends, he published a Reply to 'Letters to Unitarians,' by Dr. Woods, and followed up for several years the discussion thus begun. Meanwhile he was devoted to the regular duties of his position, preparing elaborate lectures on religion, and conducting the instruction of classes."

In September 1829, the division of doctrine developed here so that the parish voted to have the pulpit supplied three Sabbaths by Orthodox, and then three Sabbaths by Unitarian preachers. This arrangement continued for about three months.

On January 20, 1830, a new Church, called the Hollis Evangelical Society, was formed by the friends of Orthodoxy and the next Sabbath, January 24, the pastor and church met for worship in the Town House, where they continued to hold religious services till the erection of a new meeting house. The church* retained the name of the "Church of Christ in Framingham."

*On the title page of his "History of Framingham," 1847, Mr. Barry calls himself "Late Pastor of the First Church in Framingham."

The selection of the Hollis name was an emphatic protest with something of satire against the religious doctrine taught by Henry Ware as the Hollis professor of Divinity.

The parish successor of David Kellogg was Artemas Bowers Muzzey. He was ordained June 30, 1830, prominent men taking part in the ordination; among them Converse Francis and Ezra Stiles Gannet. He was a native of Lexington, a Harvard graduate in 1824, an A. M. from the Divinity School in 1828, and minister here from 1830-1833. This was his first parish. He was a loyal disciple of Henry Ware, the leader of the Harvard Unitarianism, for he gave his name to his son, Henry Ware Muzzey, born here December 1832. We have a beautiful reference to this sectarian division in the address made here at the time of our Bicentennial by the Rev. Dr. Addison Ballard, a native of Framingham who had gained distinction in Lafayette College of Eastern Pennsylvania, as follows:

"Of course I cannot but remember the split in the Old Parish, the withdrawing of the 'Orthodox,' as they were styled, and the forming of this, the Second or Plymouth Church. But even about that I had at the time a pleasant experience which many years after was deepened into the most grateful recollection. My father continued his connection with the First Parish, my mother joined the Second Church and we children were allowed, without prejudice or special solicitation, to follow the bent each of his own mind. So far as I can recall the time, not a single word of even friendly discussion was ever spoken by my father or mother in the family about the division or about the differences in Theological belief which caused it. The expectation I then had of entering Harvard College was probably the chief reason why I alone of the children, kept going with my father to the First or Unitarian Church. Rev. Artemus B. Muzzey was their first pastor, to whom, for his warm interest in the children of the congregation, I became tenderly attached. Young as I was, I taught with heart-felt devotion for my little pupils (we were all little together), a class in that Sunday School. Failing to profit by the prudent example of my parents, I fell to urging the Unitarian views on my mother but

she would never gratify my fondness for disputation or ambition to carry a point. I used to read Unitarian tracts. Once I got hold of a tract entitled 'One Hundred Questions for Trinitarians to Answer.' I charged my forensic rifle with some of those questions and went downstairs from my study-chamber, to fire them off at mother. Mother was ironing, I remember. The irons were hot, and so was I. Mother was very peaceful, as it was her wont to be. In reply to those (as I eagerly believed) unanswerable questions, she said in her sweet way, 'I don't know about those things, Addison; I only know that Christ is a very precious Saviour to me.'"

Mr. Muzzey lived to be one of the oldest graduates of Harvard, coming down into my own time when I remember seeing him as one of the leaders of the Commencement Procession. He retired May 18, 1833, returning to his home town, Cambridge, where he served a long pastorate.

George Chapman, Harvard College 1828, followed him, but he died in office in the following year. There is this record in the Barry History. "His early death disappointed the sanguine hopes of an extensive circle of friends, to whom he was ardently attached, as well as the just expectations of his people, who fully appreciated his intelligence, sincerity, and devotion. He died of pulmonary disease, having administered the communion for the last time, January 5, 1834."

William Barry, the next in line, has left a record, the most unusual, in the history of the Parish, yes, in the history of the town. There is this summary in the Appleton Encyclopedia of American Biographies:

"Barry, William, author; b. Boston Jan. 1805; d. Chicago, 17 Jan. 1885. He was graduated at Brown University in 1822 and studied law, but entered Cambridge Divinity School in 1826, and after two years there spent two years more in study in Goettingen and Paris. He was ordained pastor of the South Congregational Church, Lowell, Mass., in 1830 and in 1835 took charge of the First Church in Framingham. Failing health forced him to give up his charge in 1844 and he traveled in Europe and Asia until 1847 when he returned and took charge of another church in Lowell. In 1853 his health

compelled him to cease work again and he moved to Chicago where he organized the Chicago Historical Association in 1856 and was Secretary and Librarian until 1868. Mr. Barry was one of the most accomplished scholars and ablest writers in the East. It was in his office that President Lincoln obtained his data for his memorable address in the Cooper Institute. Among his publications are: 'Thoughts on Christian Doctrine, Lowell 1845'; 'History of Framingham, Boston 1847'; 'Antiquities of Wisconsin,' in Wisconsin's Historical Selections, Volume III, and 'Writings from the East.' "

While in Framingham, he wrote the following book: " 'A History of Framingham, Mass.' including the Plantation, from 1640 to the Present Time, with an Appendix, Containing a Notice of Sudbury and Its First Proprietors; Also, A Register of the Inhabitants of Framingham before 1800, with Genealogical Sketches."

This begins with the introduction, "The following History can possess but little interest beyond the neighborhood, whose memorials it is designed to preserve. Some may even be disposed to question the propriety of dignifying with so ambitious an epithet, the simple annals of an agricultural town, or of seeking for them the distinction of a publication from the press. The public taste has, however, created a demand for such publications; and the inquisitive interest it betokens, in respect to the characters, the deeds, the personal fortunes, of the Planters of New England, is worthy of the past, and creditable to the present. Humble and unostentatious as are the annals of our New England villages, they are such only relatively, or as judged by false standards of glory and merit. The examples they display of heroic faith, of invincible courage, of generous self-sacrifice, of bold and untiring enterprise, the illustration they afford to the genius of the age, and the race that transformed the stern cliffs and gloomy forests of these Western wilds, into a cultivated and flourishing Commonwealth, the extraordinary spectacle everywhere presented of rising schools, amidst popular ignorance, of a stern morality amidst general degeneracy, of a devout and inflexible faith amidst widespread unbelief, of a jealous and enlightened love of liberty, amidst universal despotism, all reflect

honor upon the past,—are required to give completeness to New England history, and will be recalled with an ever-increasing interest, as time shall cover with the deepening mist of antiquity, the ‘beginnings of the Commonwealth.’ Well shall it be, if the record shall not gratify a vain curiosity, nor nourish a yet vainer boasting; but the rather feed a nobler emulation, a purer patriotism, a more exalted virtue, a more generous philanthropy.”

His association as the leader of the Chicago Historical Society marks outstanding service as the Historian of the Middle West. Here is a significant record: “At a special meeting of the Chicago Historical Society, held to do honor to his memory, the following resolution was presented by Judge Skinner and unanimously adopted:—Resolved, that the Chicago Historical Society in the death of Rev. William Barry mourns the departure of its original founder, its first secretary and librarian, its earliest and best friend—the one to whose zeal and enthusiasm it owes its early and great success and its establishment on a firm foundation. A profound student and accomplished writer, a courtly and elegant gentleman, he accomplished for this society at its outset and during the first year of its history surprising results, securing for it a position among kindred associations in this country and in foreign lands, and benefits, which, but for his efforts, could not have been attained.” Think what it meant to supply Abraham Lincoln with the historical data in the wonderful Cooper Institute speech. Douglas had said that the fathers of the Constitution who recognized slavery and the duty of returning fugitive slaves knew more about the matter than we do: why not leave it as they left it. And then, Lincoln, endorsing this statement, added, “But what did they know of these matters,” and then he proved by name, date, and occasion that a majority of the forty-three signers of the Constitution would have been free soilers if they had lived to the period approaching 1860. I have brought his picture with me, mounted with that of the Historian Josiah H. Temple who followed him. And here he is, an old, white-haired, full-bearded man approaching his 80th year. A pleasing memento of his service is the Hymn “Framingham” published

in the Harpsichord in 1852, practically 100 years ago, which will be played on the organ following this address.

The record of the ministers of the Parish following William Barry is as follows: John N. Bellows, 1846-48; Joseph H. Phipps, 1848-1853; Samuel D. Robbins, 1854-1867; Henry G. Spaulding, 1868-1873; Charles A. Humphreys, 1873-1891; Ernest C. Smith, 1892-1899; Calvin Stebbins, 1900-1910; James C. Hodgins, 1911-1915; John Henry Wilson, 1915-1924; Ralph H. Baldwin, 1925-1938; John O. Fisher, 1939-1949; with George F. Patterson, interim minister while Mr. Fisher was abroad as a World War II chaplain, and Clyde D. Williams, 1949.

One of these in my own time was Charles A. Humphreys. In the Civil War he had served as Chaplain of the Second Massachusetts Cavalry Volunteers, and he left a very interesting book entitled: "Field, Camp, Hospital and Prison in the Civil War, 1863-1865." I think that in the matter of detail of the life of the soldier, as indicated, this is an unusual account. Here is a condensed sketch of contents: "War conditions in 1864"; "Women's help and inspiration in Camp and Hospital exemplified by Mrs. Josephine Shaw Lowell," wife of Col. Charles Russell Lowell, sister of Robert Gould Shaw; "Difficulties in holding Sunday services for the regiment"; "The Chaplain prepares a deserter for execution"; "A Day to Day Description of the Battle of the Wilderness"; "Taken as a prisoner, and sent to the guard-house for preaching patriotism"; "Freedom offered if he would go to Washington and urge on Lincoln an exchange of prisoners, which he declines"; "Released September 1864 and the joy of again being under the Union Flag"; "Description of Lee's surrender at Appomattox"; "The service April 16, 1865 following the news of the assassination of Lincoln."

And this final paragraph: "I count it one of the most precious privileges of my life that I once took in mine the hand of Abraham Lincoln—the brotherly hand that the first Inaugural held out to the threatening South this olive branch: 'We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory stretching

from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.' And I rejoice to have held in mine the firm hand that kept true the rudder of the Ship of State through all the storms of war; the kindly hand that heartened the soldiers in the field and in the hospital, wrote letters for the sick, and smoothed the pillow of the dying; the tender hand that wrote the Gettysburg address, and the Second Inaugural with its 'malice toward none' and its 'charity for all.' But more even than for all these I am proud to have clasped the strong hand that struck the fetters from millions of slaves and laid firm and forever in freedom the foundations of our nationality."

The service of Mr. Humphreys as minister began on November 1, 1873 and continued to November 1, 1891, when he moved to Randolph.

In 1915, he published a book of poems, "Excursions Towards Parnassus with Longings for Zion," beginning with this Preface: "These verses of mine I have never presumed to call poems; they are simply metric meditations along the way of a quiet life." But let me read a few: Here is an: "Introduction to Address on 'The Voice of Freedom' "

Awake, ye nationals, wake, with joyful songs arise,
And Liberty, fair Liberty, exalt ye to the skies!
Awake ye nations, wake, to the shrine of Freedom come,
And hear the tale I now relate of many victories won;
Of nations kept in darkness by Slavery's demon hand;
But brought to holy light and truth by Freedom's magic wand."

October 1854

How appropriate in 1950-60! And here is a "Parting Hymn for Class of 1860."

In lofty songs of grateful praise
Our hearts would now ascend
To Him who has our youth preserved,
Who will our life defend.

We've walked where Knowledge led the way;
In Wisdom's steps we've trod;
But truer wisdom here we've learned—
To know and fear our God.

In friendship strong our hearts have joined
Each other's toils to bear;
But now alone in life's hard strife
Our armor must we wear.

Let Wisdom ever be our guide,
Let all our life be love;
Then shall we meet again at last
In brighter worlds above.

June 17, 1860

And here is his answer to "What Is Life?"

When the toils of day are ended,
And we pause from all its strife,
Looking o'er the way we've wended,
Comes the question—What is Life?

And the answer comes as surely
To the simple, trusting soul:
Life is time for living purely
Writing truth upon its scroll;

Time for strong and earnest labor,
Time for kindly word and deed,
Time for love to every neighbor,
Time to give to every need,—

Bread to hungry mouths and famished,
Water clear to thirsting lips,
And to him—whose hopes are vanished,
Who the dregs of sorrow sips,—

Pity's tears, heart-hunger filling,
Sympathy's sweet cup of balm,
Cheering faith, and service willing
Stretching out the helpful palm.

Life is losing self in duty,
Loving best its lowliness;
Life is finding self in beauty,
Following most its holiness.

Life is growing each day stronger
For its conflicts stern and rude;
Life is finding each day longer
For its larger stores of good.

Life is not the greedy grasping
Of the pleasures of a day,
But the firm and thankful clasping
Of the joys that ever stay.

Life in youth is aspiration
After high and noble aims;
Manhood's life is consecration
To the work that honor claims.

Life for age is recollection
Brightening with hopes above;
Life for all is clear reflection
Of the Father's grace and love.

Let us then fill our life's story
With our noblest faith and strength,
Work for God, and not for glory,
Make this earth a heaven at length.
May 4, 1878

The ministry of Calvin Stebbins from 1900 to 1910 is marked by the bi-centennial exercises held October 13, 1901. Mr. Stebbins had made an excellent record in Worcester as Pastor before he came here and was well known as a historian, being a prominent member of the American Antiquarian Society. He took an active interest in these commemorative exercises and we have an interesting pamphlet by way of description. Rev. Lucius R. Eastman, the pastor of the Plymouth Church and the members of this church were special guests and the opening prayer was by Mr. Eastman. In the historical address the period of the pastorate of John Swift, Matthew Bridge, and David Kellogg is entertainly described and there is this description of the division which came in the Unitarian period.

"Friction was inevitable . . . The contending schools of theology at Andover and Cambridge were called in, and the contention went into the air and 'like a comet blazed' with all the passions of human nature.

" 'Not a word or a moment will I give to the rehearsal of the alienation between townsmen, neighbors, families and lifelong friends, attendant and consequent upon this lamentable business.' Both parties have vindicated their right to be, and the passions of that hour should be left in the passionless dust they once animated—in the graveyard.

"Things soon came to such a pass that only a trial of strength could settle the matter. The test vote at last came and the parish was in a majority and in so large a majority that, as the result shows, the minority had no hope of overcoming it. There was nothing for the minority to do but to submit or secede. On the 20th of January, 1830, a new parish was formed, calling itself the 'Hollis Evangelical So-

likely that any one in future will have the access that I have had to valuable sources in Poland, Transylvania and Germany, of which I suppose that many must now have been destroyed or hopelessly scattered by war. But there are numerous points that invite further exploration and fuller writing, which I could not elaborate as they deserved without throwing the history as a whole out of proportion—as, indeed, I have already done in the case of Servetus and of Priestley, who seemed in their time to have embodied it so fully. But I am unwilling to lay down my pen without suggesting a number of inviting themes that should yet be investigated and written of at length in order to make our history more complete.

Here is a bare list of such topics:

THE LIFE OF GIORGIO BIANDRATA.

THE LIFE OF FRANCIS DAVID.

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF LAELIUS AND FAUSTUS SOCINUS.

A CRITICAL EDITION OF THE RACOVIAN CATECHISM, WITH REFERENCE TO THE REVISIONS IN THE LATER EDITIONS.

THE RELATION OF THE POLISH BRETHREN TO PACIFISM.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF THOMAS BELSHAM.

THE SALTERS' HALL ASSEMBLY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE RADICAL STRAIN IN AMERICAN UNITARIANISM FROM EMERSON ON.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE OLD BOSTON CHURCHES IN THE UNITARIAN TRADITION.

THE RISE, DECLINE AND RECOVERY OF UNITARIANISM IN THE SOUTH.

A CENTURY OF UNITARIANISM ON THE PACIFIC COAST.

LOCAL HISTORIES OF ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT UNITARIAN CHURCHES IN AMERICA.

I do not mean a merely superficial and popular treatment of any of these topics, but thorough exhaustive and scholarly studies of them. They offer rich fields of investigation to any competent students who will undertake them.

I have now related the story of my history; how I came to write it, what difficulties had to be overcome to do it at all, what it has cost in long years of labor, extensive travel and no small expense, how hindrances have been removed by the generosity of friends, how I have been able to visit practically all the places associated with our movement,* how

*About the only place of historical interest to Unitarians that I have failed to visit is the site of Priestley's last years at Northumberland, Pennsylvania.

shows division after only a years service, then Joseph H. Phipps follows for six years, ending in resignation which is received with a testimonial letter. At a Parish meeting in January, 1854, Samuel D. Robbins is called by a vote of 13 yeas and one nay and is voted a salary of \$800. Then comes the financial panic most extreme in 1859, and in 1860 Mr. Robbins gives \$100 of this sum and offers another \$100 with a letter stating "If I know my own heart I assure you that my one desire is union and prosperity temporal and spiritual."

He served until 1867, thirteen years in all, covering the period of the Civil War—the beginning and recovery. He was active as a citizen, on the School Committee and Chaplain of the House of Representatives. In Temple's history it is stated that he "published occasional sermons, poems, and articles in the magazines and reviews; was a man of vigorous intellect, true culture, and pungent wit, but withal of clear spiritual discernment and religious faith." Although he died in Belmont he was buried in Edgell Grove Cemetery.

Altogether in this period there have been five meeting houses, the first, the barn-like structure on the old Burying Ground from 1701 to 1735; then the second, not much by way of improvement, on the site which has continued to the present time. This was replaced a few years later by a third meeting house, these three all having been built when the parish and the town were united, and paid for by the town appropriation.

On April 3, 1826, the parish was incorporated under the law then permitting it, and from that time has been independent of the Town, and in 1846, in the pastorate of John N. Bellows, a self-constituted committee, financed the building of a fourth meeting house, soliciting private subscriptions and selling pews.

On Sunday, April 4, 1920, this meeting house burned to the ground. In the account in the News the following day it is stated that the parish records were rescued, but that the organ and Paul Revere bell were damaged beyond repair.

Dr. William Allen Knight, associated with the Plymouth Church, a minister and long time helper, and still living in

Framingham writing most welcome editorials in the News, wrote this hymn by way of further description and tribute:

"THE HOUSE THAT LONG HAS BEEN THY TEMPLE"

(Hymn on the burning of the First Parish Church in Framingham to the Tune of "Ancient of Days")

O God the house that long has been thy Temple,
May fall beneath the rage of midnight fire,
But while the flames illumine our gazing faces
Thou the eternal art our heart's desire.

Faith, hope and love were there enshrined, our Father,
Amid the long and wayward life of men.
Mem'ries were there endeared by thine own blessing
But faith and hope and love shall live again.

All things upraised by mortal hands shall crumble;
What thou hast wrought in us shall never die.
Behold within our souls contrite and humble
Thy ceaseless Temple, O thou God most high.

With this loss by fire of one of the twin meeting houses at the end of the Common, there was some thought of a united church, but the differences still continued, as evidenced by the two versions of "Holy, Holy, Holy," one concluding with "trinity" and the other with "unity," and with the strong financial support in the First Parish plans were made for rebuilding; and soon Charles M. Baker, an active architect, with other buildings in Framingham to preserve his memory, directed the rebuilding, as now existing. The Paul Revere bell was not damaged beyond repair, and was recast and still rings out the call to public worship, and tolls the hours day and night, and money was raised for a new organ of superior excellence, named and given in honor of Frederick Lucian Hosmer, a native of Framingham whose hymns are of world-wide fame, and here for a new generation Unitarian worship has continued.

I have some personal recollections of Mr. Spaulding, as he officiated at the wedding of my sister in my home in South Framingham, January, 1874, and I have read with interest the address which he gave at the bi-centennial following Mr. Stebbins. I can appreciate the passage referring to the dinner, following his ordination, "One of the speakers for the parish was the late General George H. Gordon, who said, among other things, that if he should ever see any member

of the congregation going to sleep in meeting he would throw his hymn book at his head. Possibly the General had in mind a remark made by that zealous friend of the parish, Mr. George Phipps, when I was preaching here as a candidate. Mr. Phipps had been introduced to me as one of 'the pillars of the Church.' 'Oh, no, Mr. Spaulding,' was his quick reply, 'Not one of the pillars, only one of the sleepers.' "

I think of the men who have served as ministers of our parish, these only are now living: John Henry Wilson who was here from 1913 to 1924, now the pastor of the Congregational Church at Wilton, N. H., and at present with us today, known to his many friends as "John Henry"; John Ogden Fisher, now minister in Newton; George F. Patterson who served as interim pastor during Mr. Fisher's absence across the sea during World War II, and our present minister, Rev. Clyde D. Williams. Mr. Wilson has a special interest in this occasion as he can trace his ancestry to an associate of the founders of the parish in 1701. An ancestor, Nathaniel Wilson, had come to Framingham in 1694 and is referred to in Temple's History as a "bricklayer," probably the only one in that early settlement and as such he undoubtedly assisted in laying the foundation in 1701 which figuratively continues in 1951.

An important event in our recent history is the acquiring and opening of a parish house on land adjoining our meeting house. This estate has had an interesting record as a matter of local history, going back to the time of the Plymouth Church minister Rev. George Trask, and coming down through the family of James W. Clark, a prominent citizen, and finally through Wallace Nutting who had occupied it as his headquarters in writing his books on places beautiful. It not only furnishes ample provision for the minister's home, but also for parish suppers, meetings of miscellaneous interest and of public significance. It furnishes a combination of church and social activity promising much for the future.

Mr. Spaulding closed his address with these words appropriate today as they were fifty years ago: "Of those days of long ago, we can truly say 'The past is secure.' The men and women who then made this church a beacon light and a

center of kindly warmth for the diffusion of a pure and practical Christianity toiled not in vain. Their deeds live on. Their prayers of humble virtue made the perfume which lingers in this place. Those who have come after them have entered into their labors. For all of truth and of love that really exists at any time lasts ever. Just as the fields on these hillsides may lie fallow, or may be clothed with verdure, or covered with rich harvests, while all the time, from springs beneath, the refreshing water flows; so society may wear a new face; customs may vary; rules and standards, like human opinions, may change; but the soul and its life; man's religious aspirations and his religious activities—these abide—these make the

'One holy Church of God
In every age and race;
Unharmed, upon the eternal Rock,
Unchanged by changing place.

'In vain the surges' angry shock;
In vain the drifting sands:
Unharmed, upon the eternal Rock;
The Eternal City stands.'"

Ministers of the First Parish in Framingham 1701 to 1951

1701-1745	Rev. John Swift, A.M
1745-1775	Rev. Matthew Bridge, A.M.
1781-1830	Rev. David Kellogg, D.D.
1830-1833	Rev. Artemas Bowers Muzzey, D.D.
1833-1834	Rev. George Chapman, A.B.
1835-1845	Rev. William Barry, A.M.
1846-1848	Rev. John Nelson Bellows
1848-1853	Rev. Joseph Hobson Phipps
1854-1867	Rev. Samuel Dowse Robbins, A.M.
1868-1873	Rev. Henry George Spaulding, A.B.
1873-1891	Rev. Charles Alfred Humphreys, A.B.
1892-1899	Rev. Ernest Charles Smith, A.M.
1900-1910	Rev. Calvin Stebbins, D.D.
1911-1915	Rev. James Cobourg Hodgins, D.D.
1915-1924	Rev. John Henry Wilson, A.B.
1925-1938	Rev. Ralph Henry Baldwin, A.M.
1939-1949	Rev. John Ogden Fisher, S.T.M.
1943-1946	Rev. George Francis Patterson, D.D.
1949-	Rev. Clyde Delabar Williams, B.D.

History of The First Congregational Parish Unitarian of Kennebunk

By MELVILLE C. FREEMAN
Kennebunkport

When Americans speak of the frontier, they're usually thinking of the ever receding line of the West from the Appalachian Mountains to the Pacific shore. Yet the frontier, of course, began right here on the Atlantic coast in its primitive conditions, its primeval forests, its plentiful game, its dangerous beasts, and its more dangerous Indians. These conditions existed in the province of Maine only a little more than two hundred years ago. The first settlers in that region were just as adventurous as any who blazed or followed the wagon trails across the continent.

But it was also characteristic of these earliest frontiersmen that religion followed closely on their heels, if it did not actually accompany the first arrivals. So, not long after white men established a toe-hold in the section which they called Wells, just north of the earlier Georgiana or York, a minister appeared to look after the welfare of their souls.

He was the Rev. John Wheelwright, who, banished from Massachusetts, alighted briefly at Exeter, New Hampshire, and then with some devoted followers moved into this Maine community. His banishment, as you know, had been caused by his connection with the religious row of Boston in 1636-1637, in which Mrs. Hutchinson was the leading figure. While she and some of her associates and sympathizers moved southward, Wheelwright followed the North Star.

Religion in those days, as it had been for centuries and still remains for vast numbers of Christians, was chiefly concerned not with promoting peace, harmony, and brotherhood, but with getting to heaven. The second pastor of the old parish which I represent, in his letter of acceptance said, "Earth is the temporary abode of both pastor and people; heaven is their permanent home." That was in the year 1800. Rivalries in logic concerning matters about which men knew and could know nothing were more important than the practice of Christian principles of conduct. Said Mrs. Hutchinson, "The Holy Spirit dwells in the body of a sanctified person; but no sanctification can evidence to us our justification," and peace departed from the new and struggling community of Boston.

So the Rev. Mr. Wheelwright came to this outpost of civilization. He found here some interesting people in the little group of worshippers. There was one Robert Boothe whose deportment seems to have been exemplary in Wells where he agreed with his pastor; but when he moved to Saco where the theology of the minister took a different slant from that of his friend Wheelwright, he developed the annoying habit of rising during the sermon and challenging the preacher on points of doctrine. He was hailed into court for disturbing the peace. A sympathetic judge said, "Not guilty."

Another prominent and highly regarded churchman was Edmund Littlefield who alone held the license for dispensing strong waters to pioneers and Indians, with the proviso that he was to sell to an Indian only as much liquor as seemed for his good. A matter of rather discriminating judgment. The people must have had rare confidence in Mr. Littlefield's integrity and wisdom. Of course, rum and its more potent associates were then regarded as quite necessary and proper as a means of relieving the burdens of life and building strong constitutions, an attitude similar to that of the present day Russians, if reports are reliable.

A third parishioner, William Wardell, was a completely illiterate man, but one whose lack of ability to read or write in no way interfered with his certainty of opinion, which he expressed with noisy belligerency. He was prosecuted and fined for the language he used in explaining to the Massachusetts commissioners what he thought of them when they came to take over the dangling and rather independent province. When he was asked for a gift of money to help the infant institution of Harvard College, he refused, saying, "It is no ordinance of God and contrary to my judgment."

It was in 1653 that these commissioners arrived to take over for the Bay Colony control of this corner of New England; and naturally the church came under their jurisdiction. They could not well countenance the doctrines for which men and women had been driven from Massachusetts; therefore Parson Wheelwright faced the choice of recanting or moving. He did not want to leave, so, to the disgust of his parishioners, he recanted. They were an independent lot and admired independence; wherefore his little frontier parish

blew up, leaving only three bona fide members who qualified on the Bay Colony doctrines. Consequently the Rev. John moved anyhow, this time to Hampton, and later to Salisbury where he closed his earthly career.

From then on until the turn of the century, because of losses from Indian raids and the constant danger of attacks, population decreased and religious activity was sketchy, carried on irregularly by itinerant preachers.

At length, probably in the year 1698, Samuel Emery, a graduate of Harvard, settled in Wells, and in October of that year a town meeting agreed to cut and haul "for Mr. Samuel Emery, a minister of said town, five and twenty cords of wood for the ensuing year." That was quite a lot of fuel to keep the home fires burning, considering that ten cords were considered ample in my childhood home. But judging from other ministerial contracts that seems to have been one of the perquisites of a parson's job. Perhaps the parishioners of that day expected their minister to keep a little hotter than other householders.

In the following year the townsmen voted to rebuild the church which the savages had destroyed along with other dwellings of the settlement. Probably there was never any more bitter warfare between whites and Indians in any part of North America than that waged without quarter in southern Maine during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. It kept those who faced it very poor. The people of Wells could do no more than raise the frame and board it in for that season. It was only a shelter from the sun and rain. Even in 1703, when a William Sawyer was offered eight pounds to seat the meeting house in a proper and workmanlike manner, he turned down the proposal; so the building remained without permanent seats, glazed windows, or plastering until 1707. Nothing could more vividly reveal the poverty of the community. But the townsmen voted to give Mr. Emery 35 pounds in good merchantable goods and lumber at money prices to help him build his home, provided they would be discharged from building another parsonage later on. The minister expected to get most of his living as his parishioners did, from the land. And this gift of the people was in the midst of the Queen Anne's War, when the whole region was

visited with torch and tomahawk from Casco to Kittery. Fortunately the church was not burned in this raid.

This parish was officially organized in 1701 and the covenant was signed by twelve men. Only three women were admitted to church membership before 1710. Then there is a record of sixteen women and twenty-five men. A rather vivid example of the legal and religious position of the femine half of the population.

Meanwhile some of the pioneers had made their way to a small river some miles northward which offered water power. Tradition says that great oaks along the banks of this stream interlaced their branches over the rapids up which the salmon leaped each spring on their way to the spawning grounds. The Indians in the region came annually to catch and feast on these delicious fish and add to their permanent food supply. They called the place Kennebunk, meaning "the spot where we give thanks."

Their white supplanters kept this name, and gradually another settlement grew along and beyond this stream to another river a mile or two away. These settlers remained politically and religiously subject to the town of Wells. But they were hard put to it to satisfy their religious needs and requirements. No clergyman then had to worry about church attendance. Everybody who was physically able to travel was due to be present. Convenience had no part in the matter. As late as 1760 the General Court of Massachusetts passed a law that any person able of body who should absent himself from public worship on the Lord's Day should pay a fine of ten shillings. But a journey of five or six miles every Sunday on foot or horseback (for there were no roads or carriages) was often a serious ordeal, especially on stormy or wintry days. Consider the fact, also, that infants were often taken to the church for baptism on the day they were born. No wonder mortality was high! One had to be born tough to live at all.

It is therefore not surprising that in 1743 the inhabitants of the district of Kennebunk petitioned the town for an allotment of the town funds to establish a separate parish. The petition set forth the hardships which had to be endured by the women and children to reach the church at Wells. It was

denied, although the sum of thirty pounds was granted for religious expenses during the severe winter months, when services were presumably held in some private home or homes, but still under the jurisdiction of the Wells parish.

For five years this petition was repeated and denied. In 1749 the Kennebunk villagers lost patience, appealed to the Massachusetts General Court and the Lieut. Governor, and won their case. On June 14, 1750, the new parish was incorporated as the Second Congregational Parish of Wells. It consisted of thirty-five or thirty-six families and held its first official meeting on August 6 of that year. On the 25th of the same month an appointed committee unanimously invited the Rev. Daniel Little of Malden to become its first pastor. Long pastorates were not uncommon in those days. Ministers became institutions in their communities. Parson Little's record is phenomenal; his pastorate lasted fifty years, or until his death in 1801.

The center of population was then at a place called The Landing on the south bank of the Kennebunk river, convenient for ship-building. The first church, therefore, was located in this settlement, a plain two-storied structure, unpainted, with glazed windows on the first floor but with those on the second story level boarded up to wait for the later addition of galleries as the growing population might require them. It was set side to the road with a porch at one end. It had no belfry and no chimney. No church was supposed to require heat. The spiritual warmth inside one, the fervor of the preacher, or the contemplation of brimstone dangers were supposed to dispel the cold. Foot warmers and heavy clothing of course helped. Religion and pleasure, or even comfort, had nothing in common, and beauty had no part in Puritan theology. The grimmer life here, the greater the joy of a care-free hereafter. Besides no one expected comfort as we understand it, and it would have taken a high fireplace to heat a barn. Our forefathers would regard us today as pampered weaklings unfit to build a brave new world or preserve what we have: and maybe we are.

The only adornments of this bare meeting-house were a tablecloth, two tankards, two flagons, four cups, and two platters for the all-important communion. Money for these

and for a pulpit and two deacon-seats was raised by the sale of pews. A baptismal bowl was a gift. All the vessels were of pewter and were probably made in England.

The Rev. Daniel Little was granted one hundred pounds for the purchase of real estate, and a salary of fifty-three pounds, six shillings, and eight pence. The reason for this minute calculation does not appear. Probably it was the exact sum raised by assessment or subscriptions. For many years the members of the parish were assessed by an elected committee of three; and, although the custom of assessment was long ago discontinued, the affairs of the parish are still directed by the committee of three who retain the title of Assessors.

The parson also received the equivalent of a year's firewood, the twenty-five cords or maybe less. Whether this salary was increased during Mr. Little's pastorate is not recorded. Probably it was. It may have been added to by his missionary work, of which he did considerable, going east as far as Belfast, Castine, Blue Hill and Mount Desert, journeying, of course, on horseback and finding passage at times difficult. He preached in barns, private homes, or wherever people could gather to listen. Often in his audiences there were men and women who came twenty-five or thirty miles to hear him. However, his income was always meager, and he expected to get part of his living from his land. Costs at that time were low and did not increase notably between 1750 and 1800 except for the inflationary period during and immediately following the Revolution; and in a frontier community little cash was required. The dignity and importance of a minister's position and the certainty of income were compensations for its rather meager amount.

The people of this early parish, however, were very generous in their response to appeals from outside the community in those early days. Every Thanksgiving day a contribution was collected for charity, the first one being over fifteen pounds. Sixty-five pounds were sent to the sufferers from a bad Boston fire. A liberal donation was also made to Marblehead which lost the tragic number of one hundred and seven men and boys in violent gales at sea.

Like Samuel Emery in Wells fifty years earlier Mr. Little

built his parsonage in 1753. It is still standing and is used as a summer home.

After a prosperous and harmonious eleven years, agitation began in 1761 for the erection of a new church or remodelling the old one. We can imagine many a lively meeting and vigorous arguments over the proposals; for there were forty-seven of them in seven years before the important decision was reached to rebuild on the old site. But even then opposition was so strong that nothing was done. A third proposal had become involved, the offer of Joseph Storer, a prosperous and important citizen of the rapidly growing central village, to give land for the new site on the country road leading to Saco and Portland. The probability that this section would soon outstrip the Landing in population undoubtedly influenced the majority of the parish at length to accept this offer. The final decision was made in 1772, and building must have started immediately; for between May and November, 1773, it was voted to move to the new quarters.

The parishioners were content, however, to move slowly toward the completion of the building, or had to be until they could collect the necessary funds. Probably they were delayed by war conditions. In 1777 the seats on the main floor were lacking, and the front gallery, that is, the one opposite the pulpit was unfinished.

In 1782, after independence had been won and peace declared, the common device for raising church revenue was used. Pew occupants were asked or required to pay for them, and the building plans were completed "as far as the funds would go." A part was used to finish the front gallery and provide handsome seats for the singers, who had previously sat on either side of the center aisle near the front of the auditorium. But the parishioners seem to have been on the whole a very patient lot, since in 1799 the church interior was not quite complete.

The provision of singers' seats, however, represented the settlement of a sort of musical feud. There had been a long dispute as to whether the singers should stand or sit when they sung a hymn. Evidently it was not a question which could be settled by vote: convictions were too strong. Neither group would compromise. So some stood and some sat. This

situation was not very edifying in a solemn religious service. The new seats offered a solution: all could remain seated.

The musical customs would not harmonize with modern conceptions of sacred music. For many years one of the deacons, who sat in the chairs on either side of the communion table, would rise and read a line of the hymn to be sung: then the singers would chant it. The deacon would then read a second line again followed by the chant, and so on to the end of the hymn. In 1787, however, perhaps due to the influence of singing schools which were beginning to appear, the proposal was advanced that the hymns be sung verse by verse without reading. Now religion has always been the most conservative of institutions, and any innovation, however sensible, meets with resistance. So in the matter of singing. But it was finally agreed that singing in the morning should continue line by line, and in the afternoon verse by verse. Eventually the verse system won out as being the more sensible and pleasing and in line with custom elsewhere.

Instrumental accompaniment was at first furnished by a bass viol, sometimes disrespectfully referred to as the "bull fiddle!" The violin, the clarinet, and later the bassoon also assisted. The first organ was not installed until after 1800, probably in 1810. In 1827 this was replaced by a better one; and in 1850, the 100th anniversary of the parish, Capt. William Lord, Jr., presented the church with a third which "was the pride of the congregation." The former organ was given to a church in Standish.

Meantime another important event was the first Sunday School, which began on the 16th of May, 1819. In that year, Mr. Fletcher, who had succeeded Parson Little, on a visit to a church in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, had seen a Sunday School in operation and returned very enthusiastic over the idea. He interested his deacons and advertised the establishment of a similar school in Kennebunk. The children came flocking from homes of every shade of religious opinion with their teachers and their Bibles, two hundred and sixteen of them.

Returning to pick up the narrative, in the year 1801 Parson Little died and Nathaniel Fletcher, who in 1799 came as

assistant and acting minister, was ordained. The church attendance was now increasing rapidly as population grew, and the audience needed more room. In 1803 the building was enlarged. It was voted at first to extend it 28 feet to the rear of the existing structure. But somebody had the bright idea that by sawing the building in two and moving the rear part back so as to put the addition in between, a certain section of pew-holders would not have to shift their location with reference to the pulpit; and thus it was done. In this next year a tower was added, the belfry completed, and a bell was purchased from Paul Revere & Sons of Boston, the one we still hear on Sunday mornings. It was then rung at 7 a. m., at noon, and at 9 o'clock in the evening, the curfew hour.

The banner year of our history, unless you except the very beginning, was 1820, when Maine became a state, Kennebunk a separate town, and the Second Congregational Parish of Wells became the First Congregational Parish of Kennebunk. To celebrate this event it was voted to paint the church white; the color had been yellow. Also for the first time the auditorium was heated. On the petition of E. E. Bourne and others "that two stoves might be erected," it was voted, and they were set up on brick pavements on either side of the rear. The funnels were carried out through the windows at the opposite end. It was also voted that the fuel expense to run these novelties be limited to \$6.00. Evidently the churchgoers did not intend to get over warm. In fact, there is a tradition that on the first Sunday on which the new stoves were to be used trouble developed with the flues so that fires could not be built. The day was quite cold; but an old lady whose pew was near one of the new contraptions removed her customary wrap, saying, "I can't stand this! It is so hot my shawl is unbearable." Two years later chimneys were built to accommodate the long smoke pipes.

As you all know, previous heating was done by footwarmers, and they were still used by some whom the heat of the stoves did not effectively reach. However, the ushers could now get their coals at the church instead of having to bring them from home. One reason for the closed pews with the doors was to prevent drafts around the feet. And while I am speaking of pews, two interesting bits of construction

may be mentioned. The seats of many or all of them were hinged, so that when the minister prayed the occupants could more easily stand by tipping them up. Often the prayers were long so that the standees got tired and the seats would drop with a bang. It is not unlikely that a mischievous youngster may on occasion have increased the noise, so that the minister frowned. Also, across the front of the pew was a shelf on which a sleepy worshipper might rest his head. Occasionally the prop by accident or intention gave way with awkward results.

Another interesting feature of the building at this time was a small gallery reached by a stairway back of the organ and reserved for Negroes, a few of whom were living in the village, descendants of former slaves. A bit of evidence that in certain parts of New England, although slavery had been abolished, racial equality had not taken its place.

Unfortunately, also, in the 1820's the religious harmony which had characterized the community up to that time was broken. In part this was due, no doubt, to the social and intellectual unrest of the times; for this decade saw the beginnings of the Abolition movement, the temperance crusade, the women's rights plea, the transcendental philosophy, and some lunatic fringes such as the Hook and Eye sect who regarded buttons as contraptions of the Devil and sought salvation by the substitution of hooks and eyes. Outstanding in this intellectual unrest was the great doctrinal discussion which developed between the Orthodox and the Unitarian points of view. And among all the parishes of York County, the Kennebunk church was the only one definitely to accept by a large majority, including its pastor, the doctrines of Channing and Ware.

This was a natural result, because, although there were probably different shades of religious opinion, Parson Little had paid slight attention to creedal niceties, emphasizing worship, reverence, and Christian ethics rather than theological doctrines. The parish had been Unitarian without knowing it.

But, apart from the general unrest which I have mentioned, two things set the people to thinking along doctrinal lines. The first was the establishment of a Baptist parish in

the village, representing extremely Orthodox beliefs. The second was a critical and abusive letter sent to Mr. Fletcher by Mr. Greenleaf, the new pastor of the old Wells church, at whose ordination Fletcher had been a friendly and participating clergyman. The letter bitterly attacked Fletcher's Unitarian beliefs. In fact, there were two letters, the first anonymous, to which Mr. Fletcher paid no attention. The second, acknowledging the authorship of the first, was signed. This one the pastor laid before his parish, offering to resign if he found himself in disagreement with their sentiments. Strong resolutions of loyalty to him and his ideas were unanimously adopted at a parish meeting.

But a great deal of excitement and discussion resulted from the episode and became acrimonious. The Unitarians of the parish did not like the idea of being called infidels and other disparaging names and responded in kind. Acquaintances became strained and former friendships grew cold. So, in 1826, a part of the congregation, uniting with others who had been only occasional attendants, formed a new Union Church where the Apostles' Creed prevailed, eventually to become the Second Congregational Society. Thus were divided religiously some of the best elements of the population; and though often socially intimate, they have remained divided for one hundred and twenty-five years.

Recently there was some discussion of reuniting the two parishes for the greater strength and community influence such a union could provide. However, although there is probably very little difference in actual beliefs, the fundamental distinctions still remain which neither side will surrender nor forget.

When the division occurred, Mr. Fletcher thought it best to resign, although he was much liked and his relations with the parish remained very pleasant; and, having inherited a farm in Massachusetts, he turned to the quieter pursuits of a bucolic life toward which he had always had a strong leaning.

The next two pastorates were brief because of the poor health of both ministers. It is recorded that the remodelling of the church in 1838 was in part due to the desire to save the strength of the pastor. It required great physical effort for the preacher to make himself heard in the large audi-

Annual Meeting 1951

The Fifty-first Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society was held in King's Chapel, Boston, on Monday morning, May 21, 1951, at 10:30 o'clock, the President, Dr. Frederick L. Weis, presiding. The Secretary's report of the last annual meeting was read and approved. The report of the Treasurer, Dudley Huntington Dorr, Esq., was read, accepted and placed on file. The officers of the preceding year were reelected.

The President gave a tribute of appreciation for the life and character of the late Dr. Samuel A. Eliot whose loyal support and advice have been invaluable to our Society for many years.

The first address of the morning was given by Mr. John M. Merriam of Framingham, Massachusetts, who presented a most interesting history of the First Parish in Framingham, 1701-1951, full of anecdote and color. Mr. Merriam, now ninety, is a remarkable man himself, brilliant in mind and very sprightly in body and personality.

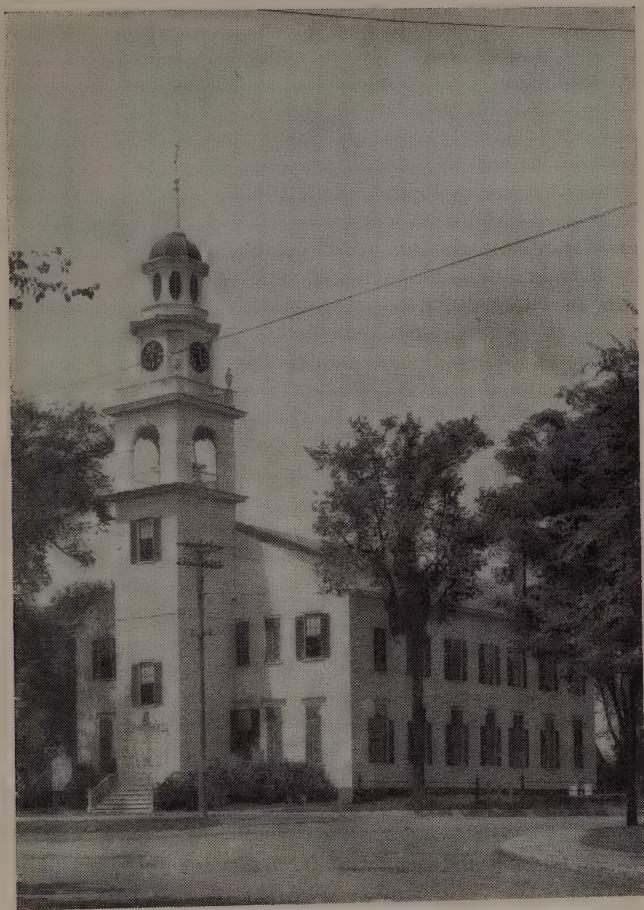
Following him, Mr. Melville C. Freeman of Cape Porpoise, Maine, gave an equally interesting and valuable account of the church in Kennebunk during the past two hundred years.

At the request of Miss Sarah I. Oliver of Worcester, the Society voted to have the remarks by the President in regard to Dr. Eliot printed in the next volume of the Proceedings.

After a short discussion of the papers, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN HENRY WILSON,
Secretary



**Second Meetinghouse of the First Parish in Kennebunk,
Built in 1773**

Samuel Atkins Eliot, D.D., LL.D.

Last October, this Society lost one of its first and most devoted members,—the Reverend Samuel Atkins Eliot, D.D., LL.D. He was one of the original group, half a century ago, who formed the Unitarian Historical Society. A Director for eighteen of his busiest years, from 1901 to 1916 and 1920 to 1923, he was elected an honorary member of this Society at its annual meeting in 1945. As a member of our Library Committee, by special invitation he was present at all meetings of the Board of Directors. In 1927, he gave an address before the Society on “A Cradle of Liberty — Being the Story of the West Church, Boston,” which was printed in our Proceedings for that year.

At one of our most ancient associated societies the other day, Dr. Eliot was referred to as a tower of strength, who, with great enthusiasm and never flagging interest, helped make the life and work of that Society vital and enduring. This statement is true not only of his work for the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians, but of our own Society, and of many another, which might have lagged but for his sound advice and continuing support.

Our modest historical society has rejoiced in the outstanding ability and distinction of many of its members during the past half century, but one of the most enthusiastic and indefatigable of them all was Dr. Eliot. To those things in which he believed, he gave his energy and assistance without stint. His three volume *Heralds of a Liberal Faith*—(the lives of our past ministers)—which he edited so well, is one of the most useful works in the whole range of American Unitarian biography.

But more than what he did or what he said, was the man himself,—genial, clear-minded, large in the integrity of his heart. Some of us as we grow older become cranky, irritable, censorious. On the contrary, Dr. Eliot mellowed with each succeeding year, for he was one of those rare individuals, who, to the very end of his days, was most keen, distinguished, delightful and loveable. This Society, and each one of us, has been most fortunate indeed, to share some small part of his very real and abounding friendship.

F. L. W.

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